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BRITAIN AND ORTH-EAST AFRICA

MAJOR E. W. POLSON NEWMAN

With 32 Illustrations

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) LTD.
LONDON AND MELBOURNE

Made and Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.
1949

PREFACE

THE war, and what led up to it, has changed the face of Europe, and will change it still further ; but in North-East Africa peaceful conditions still prevail. At this critical time, the consolidation of this great block of territories is more than ever of vital importance to Britain and to the other nations concerned. Here we have an opportunity to strengthen our position, not at the expense of others, but for their benefit as well as ours. Let us do so by all the appropriate means in our power, thereby helping to construct in Africa while Europe is in the midst of destructive effort. A peaceful Africa may have a powerful influence on a belligerent Europe.

In *Ethiopian Realities* I described the history of the previous Ethiopian Empire from the reign of Theodore, and the events leading up to the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-36 ; in *Italy's Conquest of Abyssinia* I gave an account of the hostilities which culminated in the Italian occupation of Addis Abeba in May, 1936 ; and in *The New Abyssinia* I related my experiences in a comprehensive tour of Italian East Africa in 1937.

This book is a continuation of the subject in a wider sense, keeping pace with the forward movement of events. The subject matter was collected during my three recent journeys to North-East Africa. In 1935 I visited Ethiopia, British Somaliland, and French Somaliland, shortly before the outbreak of hostilities. In 1937 I saw what had been done in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Italian Somaliland, since the Italian occupation. In 1938 I went to Egypt, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Italian East Africa to study the possibilities of co-operation between Great Britain, Italy, and Egypt as an outcome

of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, and the Anglo-Italian Agreement of 1938, with special reference to the opening up of transit routes between Italy's new Empire and the surrounding territories.

My object is to encourage further study of the future possibilities of this vast African area, which depends in some way or other on the Nile and has its littoral on the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean.

In recent years the development of the internal combustion engine in the form of aviation and motor transport has opened up new and great possibilities throughout this entire region; and this reached an advanced stage simultaneously with the decision of Great Britain, Italy, and Egypt to co-operate in Africa for their mutual benefit.

What the future holds in store for North-East Africa is of the utmost importance to Great Britain, whose main lines of communications with the Far East pass this way. It is of no less interest to Egypt, who depends for her life on the Nile waters and stands to derive material benefit from increased trade and transit. The Sudan, owing to her geographical position, shows promise of becoming a central pivot of transit by land, river, and air, thereby increasing her wealth. Italian East Africa, besides absorbing Italian colonists and supplying Italy with raw materials and foodstuffs, will in course of time become an important factor in the world's trade. British and French Somalilands have their own particular functions to perform, and are also destined to play their respective parts in the development and progress of North-East Africa as a whole.

In order, however, that substantial progress can take place, whole-hearted co-operation between the nations is essential for the maintenance of public security, the opening up and operation of transit routes, and the carrying out to the best advantage of development projects.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to outline the situation in each of the African territories concerned, to show the opportunities arising from co-operation and

recent transport developments, and to draw conclusions as to future prospects. If the narrative contains some repetitions, their object is to make each section as far as possible complete in itself. Also, with this object in view, I have included a short summary at the end of the description of each well-defined territorial unit. In order to help those who wish to obtain more detailed information on any particular country or subject, I have prepared a short bibliography.

My thanks are due to many distinguished personages, ministers, and officials in Europe and in the countries concerned, who have facilitated my investigations and through their courtesy oiled the machinery of a complicated and difficult task. In collecting detailed information about the Suez Canal, I received valuable help from Sir Arnold Wilson, and I am deeply grateful to Major F. Newhouse, late Inspector-General of Egyptian Irrigation in the Sudan, for checking the details of my chapter on the Nile waters. I also owe a great deal to the valuable help of my wife, who accompanied me to Africa on my second and third journeys.

E. W. POLSON NEWMAN.

LONDON.

February, 1940.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	5
I.	NORTH-EAST AFRICA	13
II.	EGYPT'S NEW POLICY	31
III.	PROGRESS IN EGYPT	50
IV.	THE SUEZ CANAL	66
V.	THE WATERS OF THE NILE	87
VI.	THE MODERN SUDAN	110
VII.	SUDAN TRADE AND TRANSIT	133
VIII.	ITALY'S NEW EMPIRE	159
IX.	ITALY'S AFRICAN WEALTH	182
X.	BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND THE SOMALIS	202
XI.	ITALY AND HER AFRICAN NEIGHBOURS	222
XII.	NEW TRANSIT ROUTES	243
XIII.	BRITISH INTERESTS AND THE FUTURE	254
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	275
	INDEX	279

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAP OF NORTH EAST AFRICA	<i>Frontispiece</i>
H.H. KING FAROUK	FACING PAGE 32
THE NILE AT ASSUAN	33
CAIRO, PLACE SULEIMAN PASHA	33
ITALIAN SEAPLANE, ALA LITTORIA	48
BRITISH FLYING BOAT, IMPERIAL AIRWAYS	48
EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT, MISR AIRWORK	49
THE DESERT ROAD, CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA	49
THE SUEZ CANAL, PORT SAID	96
THE SUEZ CANAL, PORT TEWFIK	96
THE SUEZ CANAL, SIGNAL STATION	97
SOURCE OF THE BLUE NILE	97
THE ASSIUT BARRAGE	112
THE MAKWAR DAM, BLUE NILE	112
KHARTOUM FROM THE AIR	113
THE UPPER NILE. SUDD REGION	113
SUDAN TRANSIT ROUTES	<i>page</i> 139
MALAKAL, ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN. GOVERNOR'S BUNGALOW	160
SUDAN GOVERNMENT STEAMER	160
PORT SUDAN, R.M.S.P. COMPANY'S 'ASTURIAS'	161
SUDAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS	161
KASSALA, ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN	176

	FACING PAGE
GALLABAT, ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN (EASTERN ARAB CORPS)	176
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF AOSTA, VICEROY OF ETHIOPIA .	177
ADDIS ABEBA. PIAZZA LITTORIO	208
ADDIS ABEBA. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING . . .	208
ITALIAN EAST AFRICA. BRIDGE BUILDING . . .	209
ITALIAN EAST AFRICA. COFFEE PLANTATIONS AT IRGALEM	209
THE SHEIKH PASS, BRITISH SOMALILAND	224
BERBERA, BRITISH SOMALILAND. THE CUSTOMS WHARF	224
JIBUTI-ADDIS ABEBA RAILWAY	225
JIBUTI. GOVERNOR'S PALACE	225

CHAPTER I

NORTH-EAST AFRICA

WHEN Bonaparte said that "Egypt is the most important country in the world," he did not foresee the coming of the internal combustion engine. Had he anticipated the conquest of the air and the opening up of remote, and hitherto impassable, regions by modern mechanical transport, he would possibly have extended his dictum to cover the whole of North-East Africa. For thousands of years the Nile has made North-East Africa a most important area in the various stages of development of the political and economic world. Last century, the opening of the Suez Canal for world shipping greatly increased the significance of this region. To-day, aviation is rapidly making these countries into great transit routes for the swift movement of passengers and mails to and from distant parts of Africa and Asia. Motor transport is forging efficient routes for quick transit and trade in districts which have only known the meagre services of the camel, the mule, and the ass. This means that North-East Africa is destined to see great changes before many years have passed. Most important in this connexion is the birth of a new Ethiopia, which will in course of time contribute an ever-increasing share in the development of the area served by the Nile and the Red Sea.

In applying the specific term 'North-East Africa' to that great region comprising Egypt, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Italian East Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Italian Somaliland), and British and French Somalilands, I believe that I am one of the first to regard this area as a

comprehensive political and economic unit. This is no claim to individuality of thought, but merely an indication that events in that particular region have reached a stage when their future influence on the individual and collective progress of the countries concerned must be judged on a more or less unified basis. The latest achievements of modern transport on land and in the air must be used either to develop or to destroy, and for development in this immense area international co-operation is essential. The reason why such great changes are expected as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty,¹ and the Anglo-Italian Agreement,² is that a policy of co-operation has been simultaneous with sensational developments in aviation and motor transport.

As a result of superficial study of atlases a great many people have a deep-rooted impression that the countries about which I am writing are little more than different names for a varied collection of desert regions. Egypt is recognized as a traditional land of plenty, and there has been talk about mysterious wealth in Ethiopia ; but the popular idea is that from somewhere in Egypt to somewhere to the north of the Union of South Africa there are thousands and thousands of miles of 'sweet damn all !' Travellers who have passed through the Red Sea on journeys to and from India or the Far East have unhappy recollections of grey skies, sand-laden air, sweltering heat, and eternal thirst. Their impressions of the mountains on either side are those of barren barriers to forbidding lands beyond. While there is a certain element of truth in the ideas implanted in the mind of the passing traveller, there is a great deal else which he does not see. This is the part which really matters. There are many deserts and they cover immense areas. They vary in topographical features in the same way as the cultivated parts of the world. They have their mountains, plains, and water-courses ; but the mountains have no trees, the plains have no cultivation, and the water-courses

¹ Egypt No. 1 (1936). Cmd. 5270.

² Treaty Series No. 31 (1938). Cmd. 5726.

have no water. This, however, is speaking in rather general terms, for in some regions the plains provide grazing-grounds for camels, which are not particular about what they eat. In others, the coming of the rains transforms dried-up water-courses into raging torrents. Although every one of these countries has desert regions within its frontiers, some more than others, there are great areas of fertile land as well as land that can be made cultivable by irrigation.

Egypt, with all its agricultural wealth concentrated on the banks of the Nile, is 98 per cent desert. In order to appreciate this to the fullest extent, it is necessary to fly over the country in an aeroplane. You then see the rich green cultivation of the Delta narrow near Cairo into a thin green strip marking the Nile valley right up to Assuan and beyond. On either side there is nothing but sand, relieved here and there by hills and dried-up water-courses. To the east, the Arabian Desert separates the Nile from the mountains of the Red Sea; to the west, the Libyan Desert stretches away to Italian Libya and the Kufra Oasis. Although frontiers such as this are marked clearly and definitely on maps, they are in reality imaginary lines in the sand with a military post here and there, and in the latter case a good deal of barbed-wire entanglement. In the Sudan, the Nile is also the general provider of cultivation, which has been most developed in the Gezireh—a strip of land between the Blue and White Niles, south of where they meet at Khartoum. But there are also productive areas away from the river where water is supplied by rainfall or by the flooding of otherwise dried-up tributaries of the Nile as a result of the Ethiopian rains. Farther south, there is a region of tropical forests and vegetation.

Ethiopia is a land of immense variety. There are barren mountains and useless deserts, but the greater part of the country is rich and fertile owing to its height and heavy rainfall. Arranged for the most part in a series of plateaux, there are few cereals, vegetables, or fruits, which cannot be grown somewhere. There are also large

timber forests, a considerable supply of minerals, and large areas suitable for rearing cattle and sheep. Eritrea, on the other hand, is a poor country with a high plateau, rugged mountains and low-lying plains. The only part that is really suitable for Europeans has such a light rainfall that little can be done in the way of agriculture. Italian Somaliland has also its share of desert in the north ; but in the south, cultivation is carried out by irrigating the land bordering on the Juba and Webi Shebeli rivers.

The situation, such as has been described, presents a region partly watered by one of the greatest rivers of the world, and partly by heavy rainfall. Ever since the earliest days attempts have been made to increase the value of the Nile for the purpose of cultivation, and in more recent times great dams and barrages have been erected to control its waters, so as to meet the needs of the countries through which it flows. In the mountainous regions of heavy rainfall farther south little or nothing has been done until quite recently to make use of the rich cultivable areas provided by Nature. Hence, we have a large area with more than an ample supply of water from the skies next door to an even larger area, whose peoples have struggled through the centuries to extract as much water as possible from a river on which their very life has depended. Hitherto there has been an uneven distribution of water throughout North-East Africa, a spasmodic system of cultivation and a great variation in density of population.

This region has known some of the most ancient civilizations of the world, and some of the most famous men in history. The ancient Egyptians possessed knowledge of the arts and sciences, much of which has since faded into oblivion. The ancient Ethiopians extended their dominions to the valley of the Nile, but found no means of linking up their ample water supply with that of territories farther north. Alexander, Augustus, and Saladin at different times set foot in Egypt, but the means at their disposal were quite inadequate to turn the possibilities of the Nilotic lands to the fuller use of man.

Even Napoleon saw little beyond the Egyptian Delta. It was not until the days of Mohammed Ali, and the later arrival on the scene of Ferdinand de Lesseps, that a beginning was made to develop the threshold of the countries of the Nile and Red Sea. But the serious start of material development and progress came after the opening of the Suez Canal, when Lord Cromer began to fashion the structure of modern Egypt. As the need arose for pushing civilization farther south, Lord Kitchener put an end to chaos in the Sudan by subduing the Khalifa, and by bringing peace and good administration to that country. Such order and prosperity as these two African countries enjoy to-day is chiefly due to the incessant labours of these two men of energy, resource, patience, and understanding.

Yet the progress in public works, irrigation, and transport, carried out by Lord Cromer was purely confined to Egypt. Vast spaces separated Egypt from the other countries of North-East Africa, and the only means of crossing them was by slow-moving camel caravans or almost equally slow-moving Nile steamers. Each country was practically in a watertight compartment, and to all intents and purposes they belonged to different worlds. News travelled slowly. Happenings in Ethiopia were not known in Cairo for many months afterwards, if reports of them ever reached the Egyptian capital at all. In these circumstances, the term 'North-East Africa' had no significance whatever in the minds of men except as a vague geographical expression. Anyone who had suggested the idea of trying to rationalize the resources of a region so vast and vague would have been regarded as mentally deficient.

While the Nile connects up many countries inland, the Red Sea performs a similar function along its western shores. The Nile connects Egypt with the Sudan, Italian East Africa, and Uganda; the Red Sea forms a means of communication between Egypt, the Sudan, Italian East Africa, and French Somaliland. Of the Red Sea ports Port Sudan and Massawa are the only harbours of any

natural value, although an artificial harbour is being built at Assab. Jibuti, which is technically in the Gulf of Aden, is situated in a well-protected bay and could be made into a harbour of considerable utility. Although the Red Sea is separated from the Mediterranean by the Suez Canal, recent events have made it necessary to consider both seas more or less as one from the point of view of politics and strategy. Italy's vital transit interests have now been extended from the Suez Canal to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb.

Before the Italo-Ethiopian War, Italian interests in the Red Sea area were confined to the protection of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, colonies of little value at the time, and such Italian shipping as passed through these waters. Now the situation has completely changed. Italian East Africa is an immense territory, which will supply Italy with raw materials, minerals, and foodstuffs, and at the same time absorb a large number of Italian subjects. With the development of this region Italian shipping and trade along the Red Sea route will steadily increase. Italy now holds an important strategical position behind Cape Guardafui. The only Italian naval base at present in operation is at Massawa, but steps will be taken to strengthen Italy's shore defences in the Red Sea in proportion to the warships considered necessary to protect these waters. Yet the Suez Canal is a formidable defile separating Italy's extensive possessions in North-East Africa from the mother-country, in the same way as it separates British Somaliland and French Somaliland from British and French naval bases in the Mediterranean.

Of all the barren, sun-scorched, and jagged-looking islands of this stifling inland sea, the only two worth mentioning are Perim, a British coaling station, and Dumeira, which was ceded by France to Italy in the Franco-Italian Agreement of January 1935.

The Suez Canal, which has long been of supreme importance to the maritime nations of the world and to the countries of North-East Africa, has naturally been the object of much political controversy. While its impor-

tance to British imperial interests has been the chief cause of what was long known as 'the Egyptian Question,' this narrow waterway has acted as the cement that binds Great Britain to Egypt, thereby being largely responsible for the prosperity existing in Egypt to-day. Among the important points to be remembered in connection with the Canal is the fact that it is an international waterway open to the ships of all nations in peace and war, and that it is administered by a private company, whose concession has only twenty-eight years to run before it reverts to the Egyptian Government. Although Great Britain still tops the list in the Canal shipping returns, Italian shipping now occupies second place. This entitles Italy to be represented on the board of the company as one of the 'nations principally interested' according to the terms of the Suez Canal Concession.¹

The great international lines of communication passing through North-East Africa chiefly concern Great Britain, France, and Italy. On the British side there is the imperial route to India and the Far East, via the Suez Canal by sea, and via Alexandria by air. There are also British sea communications with South and East Africa, and the South African air route via Alexandria, Cairo, Khartoum, and Kisumu. On the French side, there is the route to France's far-eastern possessions and to Madagascar. On the Italian side there are the sea communications between Italy and her new African Empire, and her merchant shipping routes to South Africa and the Far East. There is also the Italian air line connecting Italy and Libya with Egypt, the Sudan, and Italian East Africa.

Although Britain has an alternative route via the Cape, the value of the Red Sea route to India is immense, especially as it runs more or less parallel to the air route via Alexandria, Baghdad, and the Persian Gulf. This is now more than ever a vital link in the whole British imperial system. Almost equally important is this

¹ Suez Canal Concession 1856 Statutes. Art. 24.

route to France as far as some of her colonial possessions are concerned. What Aden is to Britain as a half-way coaling station, Jibuti is to France. In so far as Italian East Africa is of value to Italy, so are her Red Sea communications vital to her new imperial system, and a large percentage of her trade now passes through the Suez Canal. It is as well to remember here that while Great Britain and France have an alternative route, Italy is for all practical purposes confined to that of the Red Sea. Also Italy's position within the confines of the Mediterranean makes her complete freedom of action throughout the Mediterranean and Red Sea an absolute necessity.

Since the earliest times, the importance of North-East Africa to successive stages of civilization has been largely connected with transport. This can be divided into three phases. The early Egyptians used the Nile as a means of transit between their various African possessions. Thebes, known to-day as Luxor, and Memphis, near Cairo, were at different times centres of river navigation and trade throughout the thousands of years covered by the ancient Egyptian dynasties. This is the Nile, or first phase, in the history of these countries from the point of view of transport. In more recent times, Napoleon brought to Egypt French influence, which was increased by Ferdinand de Lesseps in the construction of the Suez Canal. This was soon followed by the purchase by Great Britain of a large block of shares in the Suez Canal Company. The second, or Suez Canal phase, includes the period of Lord Cromer's constructional work in Egypt and the increase of British influence in that part of the world; likewise, the transformation of the Sudan from an uncivilized country of warlike peoples into a more or less peaceful area to the south of Egypt, with a civilizing administration suited to the special needs of the country. During this period British and French influence in Egypt went side by side, sometimes smoothly and at other times with varying degrees of friction. Although Italian influence has been increasing for many years, it was not until the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935 that Italy

came with the full force of the internal-combustion engine. While already holding Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, the Italians proceeded to conquer Ethiopia in a few months with the help of modern aviation and motor transport. This forms the latest phase in the history of transport development in North-East Africa—that of the internal-combustion engine.

When Lord Napier went to Magdala in 1867, his transport was largely composed of elephants from India. Marshals Badoglio and Graziani went to Ethiopia in 1935 with aeroplanes and diesel-engine lorries. The answer to the question why the wealth of Ethiopia has never before been made use of by a European power, is that without the internal-combustion engine its conquest and development were impossible. At the end of the Italo-Ethiopian War, when hostilities gave place to development projects, the Italians carried out some remarkable feats in civil aviation, notably that of their Under-Secretary for Air, who flew from Massawa to Rome in one day. Partly through necessity and partly owing to the air-mindedness of the Italian people, regular civil air services were soon instituted between Italy and her new African possessions. Meanwhile, the leaders of British civil aviation had, for some years, been making a special study of a service from England to South Africa, using North-East Africa as a transit area. As the development of this great achievement by Imperial Airways is both interesting in itself and of utmost importance to British communications throughout the Empire, some reference to it in a book of this kind is essential.

In 1928 Imperial Airways had no organization in central or southern Africa. Experimental flights had been made between Khartoum and Kisumu and there was an embryonic service in operation between Cairo and Basra, but at that time the African route existed only on paper. During the summer of 1928, Wilson Airways, later an associate company of Imperial Airways, operated an air-taxi service in Kenya, and Sir Alan Cobham, of Cobham-Blackburn Air Lines, made an

extensive survey of the territory in a large flying-boat. In 1930, this company was also assimilated by Imperial Airways, these two events forming the beginning on which the present service was built up. Ten years later, on Wednesday, 13 April 1938, a flying-boat took off from Southampton Water, and her passengers had their mid-day meal on the following Saturday in Durban. This flying-boat, *Ceres*, had travelled a little over 7,200 miles in four days. She had stopped *en route* at about twenty landing-grounds, each of them being a fully-equipped and perfectly-organized unit in the company's ground organization between Southampton and Durban. The development of this route and the services operating thereon has been achieved in less than ten years, which is a short time in view of the vast amount of surveying, planning, building, and general organization involved in the opening up of a regular air route.

It is interesting to trace developments year by year from the crude beginnings to the highly efficient system of to-day. In 1929, the whole route from Cairo to Capetown was surveyed by a group of experts representing the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways. It took nearly a year to collect the necessary data, and it was not until April 1930 that the survey was completed. During that year a weekly mail and passenger service between England and Tanganyika was started. Hitherto mails and passengers had been carried by Imperial Airways only on the section of the Indian-Malayan route that extended as far as Calcutta.

In 1931, the trans-Mediterranean section of that route was split into two separate branches; one extending to Calcutta, the other turning southwards through Africa. Negotiations had been proceeding for some time between the British Government and the Governments of the Union of South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika Territory, and Northern and Southern Rhodesia. In 1930, these Governments had agreed to share the financial and operational responsibilities for the maintenance of a weekly mail and passenger

service between London and Capetown. It was decided that the route should follow approximately the course of the Nile, from Cairo via Assuan and Wadi Halfa to Khartoum, and through the centre of the Sudan to Juba. For all practical purposes the first part of this route ran due north and south, but from Juba the course turned east in order to reach Kisumu and Nairobi. From Nairobi the course continued in a south-westerly direction into Tanganyika and then on to Broken Hill. From Rhodesia the route followed a southerly course, and originally terminated at Johannesburg ; but, for political reasons, it became necessary later to make Durban the terminus. Once the route had been selected the work of organization on a permanent basis proceeded apace, and by February 1931, the first section from Cairo to Mwanza was brought into operation. In January 1932 the entire route was finally opened to traffic. The air mail from Cairo to Khartoum was operated by three-engined land-planes, from Khartoum to Kisumu by flying-boats, and from Kisumu to Capetown by other land-planes.

Meanwhile a special wireless survey of the African route was undertaken by the Marconi Company in co-operation with the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways. The result was the development of a completely new aircraft wireless equipment, capable of communicating either on the medium wave-length usually employed for ground and air contact or on the short wave. With the signing of the agreement for the operation of the African service, a complete chain of wireless stations became necessary, for south of the Sudan practically no wireless facilities existed. Twelve stations were therefore set up—at Kampala in Uganda ; at Nairobi in Kenya ; at Moshi, Dodoma, and Mbeya in Tanganyika ; at Mpika and Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia ; at Salisbury and Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia ; and at Germiston, Victoria West, and Capetown in the Union of South Africa.

In 1932, the weekly service between London and

Mwanza was extended to Capetown for the carriage of mails, and the Kisumu-Mwanza section was abandoned. In the same year, facilities for the transport of passengers were established on this route in both directions. In 1933 the flying time was reduced by 24 hours by making the Cairo-Khartoum section a one-day flight. In 1934, a flat rate of 6d. per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. for Eastern and South African mails was introduced. In the same year, the service was duplicated, providing bi-weekly flights in both directions. The change-over from land-planes to flying-boats on the whole route took place in 1937, when the first of the new fleet of Imperial flying-boats was commissioned for service. This was an important turning-point. During the summer months the project of carrying all letters between England and Africa by air at the ordinary rate of 1½d. per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. became an accomplished fact. In the following year, this was extended to the Indian route, and it is now a matter of history that before the present war Imperial Airways were the carriers of all first-class mails throughout that part of the British Empire which lies in the Eastern Hemisphere, and that these mails were carried without surcharge. Early in 1938, all Imperial Airways Empire services were augmented and accelerated. In August 1939 there were eight services a week to Egypt, which was reached in 30 hours; three a week to East Africa, reached in 3 days; two a week to West and South Africa, reached in 4½ days; and five 3-day services to India; three 5½-day services to Malaya, two 6-day services to Hong Kong, and three 8-day services to Australia.

This was the position of the Imperial Airways Empire Services before the war made it necessary to modify the schedule. These services were rapid and efficient, but they had not yet reached the final stage of their development. The 'all up' air mail proved to be a heavier burden than was anticipated, and during the period just before the war the calls of rearmament and air training were making the task of the company increasingly difficult. Further accelerations and improvements in

punctuality will naturally be introduced as soon as circumstances permit, and South Africa will share as generously in future developments as she has done in the past. With new aircraft, enlarged staff, night flying, and increasing experience, it is impossible to say when or at what point the final stage of development will be reached. In any case, this has yet to come.

The remarkable strides recently made in civil aviation by Great Britain and Italy are revolutionizing transit and other conditions in North-East Africa, but they are merely the forerunners of greater trade movements to come. Khartoum is now within two days of England by the Imperial Airways South African service of flying-boats, and Addis Abeba will shortly be within two days of Italy by the Ala Littoria Line. This means that, apart from river and rail communications, Khartoum has direct air services to Egypt and Europe in the north ; to Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Portuguese East Africa, and the Union of South Africa in the south ; to Italian East Africa in the east ; and to French Equatorial Africa, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast in the west. In other words, Khartoum is already becoming the central pivot of communications in one of the most important transit areas of the world.

Meanwhile, the Italians have been busy building all-weather tarmac roads through their newly acquired territories. These new communications, specially designed for heavy motor vehicles, are replacing the old mule tracks of former days and will be extended to the frontiers on all sides. Twisting and turning through the mountain ranges of Ethiopia, these new highways form the main lines of communication with the Red Sea ports, and will eventually link up the interior of Ethiopia with the frontiers of the Sudan. There is already heavy motor traffic on the road connecting Massawa with Asmara and Addis Abeba—a distance of 437 miles as the crow flies, but over 700 miles by road—and this route is now used in preference to the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway. At present the Sudan roads are mere desert tracks passable

for light motor transport in fine weather, with bridges built over rivers and ravines. In Egypt, serious road-building has only just begun, but as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty much progress in this direction is taking place. In all these countries the wireless mast is beginning to compete with the minaret ; the smooth tarmac road is supplanting the wide, sandy, desert track and the narrow mountain bridle path ; and, much to be regretted, the harsh hoot of the motor horn is gradually replacing the gentle tinkle of the camel bell. The solitude and silence of the desert is being sorely disturbed by the drone of the aeroplane, and the twentieth-century flying-boat circles over ancient temples before gliding down on to the surface of the Nile with a shower of spray. While these modern inventions are accepted as a part of everyday life in Europe, in North-East Africa they come as the messengers of dramatic changes. Although the lazy and somewhat picturesque life and atmosphere of these countries is somewhat disturbed by their arrival with all their trappings, their benefit to the native populations must be great and far-reaching. In this connection I cannot do better than quote what H.H. the Aga Khan said to me at the time of the World Economic Conference in London, as far back as 1933.

“ Among the chief reasons why the Moslem countries lost their economic significance was the absence of cheap transport in a region where such waterways as the Nile, the Indus, and the Euphrates are separated by vast continental areas. When railway transport came to be used elsewhere, the initial cost of this form of communication made it practically impossible to supply these countries with the means of sharing the prosperity of the West in the nineteenth century. As they could not keep pace with the prosperous progress of that time, they tended more and more to form a separate world of their own. To-day, however, the internal combustion engine has, by providing new and cheap forms of transport, altered the whole aspect of the geographic and economic unit. Great areas, hitherto undeveloped, now hold out

immense opportunities. The distance covered by a camel caravan in a month can now be done by an aeroplane in a few hours, and there is no saying to what remarkable extent these desolate lands will be transformed by means of cheap aviation. Undoubtedly, the overland route to the East is coming into its own again, linking up Europe with the densely populated countries of Eastern and Southern Asia by a cheap and rapid form of transport." The same applies to North-East Africa.

While it is a happy coincidence that this advanced stage of transport development should be accompanied by agreement on a policy of co-operation between the principal Powers concerned, this policy has largely been brought about by the circumstances resulting from this transport development. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance, signed in August 1936, was speeded up, if it was not actually brought about, by the necessity of Britain and Egypt safeguarding their mutual interests in the situation arising out of the Italo-Ethiopian War. Had it not been for this contingency, the long series of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations might well have continued for many years to come. The Anglo-Italian Agreement, signed in April 1938, was a result of geographical facts and the acknowledgment on both sides that respective interests were complementary where they were not identical. As far as North-East Africa is concerned, acceptance of the *fait accompli* made it quite clear that Britain and Italy must be either firm friends or fierce foes, and it was obvious to both sides that friendship and co-operation was the only sane course to follow.

On the geographical side, Italian East Africa now occupies a large block of territory commanding the southern outlet of the Red Sea, a vital point on British imperial communications with the Far East and containing the head waters of the Blue Nile, which provides a large proportion of the water needed for cultivation in the Sudan and Egypt. Italy is also in a strong position in Libya, which is next door to Egypt on the Mediterranean. On the other hand, Italy's new Empire is

separated from the mother country by the Suez Canal and her East African possessions are almost entirely surrounded by British or Anglo-Egyptian territories. From the point of view of public security in these regions, everything depends on the European Powers working together, and coming to friendly agreements about small exchanges of territory to regularize frontier positions. When it comes to the matter of economics, development, and trade, collaboration for mutual benefit is the only possible means of insuring widespread success. In a region where countries are so differently constituted, populations so diverse in character and customs, and distances so great, the greater the degree of international co-operation the better the prospect of reaching some form of rationalization of development, production, and general utility services.

Serious as were the political repercussions of the Italo-Ethiopian War in Europe as well as in Africa, the coming into operation of the Anglo-Italian Agreement will see Britain, with Egypt as her ally, pursuing a policy of African partnership with Italy, which must have a beneficial effect wherever its influence is felt. So comprehensive and detailed is this new agreement that there is little room for misunderstanding, and it practically goes without saying that France will eventually follow the British lead in seeking a satisfactory settlement with Italy in respect to her interests in the Mediterranean and Red Sea. When this has been achieved, the way will be clear for development and progress of a kind that is only possible in an atmosphere of friendly collaboration. A general settlement in North-East Africa will solidify this region as a definite unit in world affairs, and cannot fail to be a valuable influence in Europe.

Naturally development on modern lines of so immense a region by nations with different political and economic ideas bristles with minor difficulties, apart altogether from those of overcoming the forces of nature. Each European nation, according to its particular form of government and economic system, has its own merits,

short-comings, and difficulties. None of them are insuperable. While travelling in this part of the world it is astonishing to see the ingenious ways in which some of these difficulties can be overcome by drawing on the international pool of ideas, objects, and methods. Later chapters will show in detail how all that is needed for successful co-operation is the will to work together, and the realization that by this alone can success be achieved.

North-East Africa, as a whole, is not a great fertile area, but a region with valuable resources of a most varied kind scattered throughout its wide domains. It has the great benefit of being a great transit area, especially so in view of modern transport developments. Much can be done to extract the best results obtainable from its natural resources by political and economic co-operation, by the application of twentieth-century methods, and by turning to the best account transit opportunities. Rationalization in many directions can not only increase this region's productive and transit value, but can also bind together the mutual interests of the Powers concerned into an increasingly homogeneous whole.

At this point it is essential to stop looking at atlases and to turn to large-scale maps. In the former, Libya appears to be a vast area of great importance in North Africa ; in reality, it is little more than a strip of cultivated coastal oases stretching along the Mediterranean littoral, with the well-appointed cities of Tripoli and Benghazi and a first-class coast road connecting Tunis with the Egyptian frontier. The remainder of Libya consists of sand. In the same way, Egypt, which also has a formidable appearance in the atlas, is in fact confined to the Nile Delta and Valley. Here also the remainder is sand. Hence, many things, which look possible in a small-scale map, may look quite unfeasible when the country is reproduced on a larger scale. It is, also, as well to remember that many places marked in comparatively large type on maps of these regions are in reality very small and insignificant when seen through European eyes. Some may be villages with a few huts, some may

be centres where caravan routes meet, others may be water-holes. In many parts of Africa a water-hole is life or death to the inhabitants of a large region ; it may be much more important to the people of that region than Birmingham is to England.

CHAPTER II

EGYPT'S NEW POLICY

SITUATED on the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and with the Nile and Suez Canal passing through her territory, Egypt is the central pivot on which all transit between North-East Africa and Europe must at present converge. Egypt's significance has long depended on her position as one of the most important cotton-producing countries, and still longer as one of the most historical and romantic treasure-houses of the world. In the international sense, Egypt stands out as the country through which runs the Suez Canal, which has made her a country of special interest to Britain, the greatest maritime nation in the world. As a result of this latter connection, Anglo-Egyptian relations long occupied an important place in the policies of successive British governments.

The special position of Great Britain as protector of Egypt was fully recognized in 1904 by the other Great Powers, although it was not until the Great War that Egypt became temporarily a British Protectorate. At the end of the War, national feeling ran high in Egypt, where great importance was attached to the principle of self-determination, and to the Anglo-French declaration of 1918, announcing the proposal of the Allies to liberate the peoples that previously formed part of the Ottoman Empire. While there was a strong feeling in England that Egypt should be incorporated within the British Empire for the benefit of both countries, the Egyptian Nationalists, under the able leadership of Zaghlul Pasha, clamoured for independence.

They felt that the opportunity had now come for Egypt, released from Turkish domination, to stand up before the world as the leading Moslem State, and as the modern representative of a wealthy and illustrious civilization that flourished thousands of years before the name of 'Europe' ever entered the minds of men. In order to fulfil this role, it was essential that Egypt should be an independent sovereign State. In the opinion of the British Government, however, Egypt was not in a position to manage her own affairs, and her geographical position made the taking of risks unjustifiable. At this time, Egyptian aspirations and British interests could not fit in with one another, and Lord Milner's proposals in 1920 for a treaty of alliance, with military safeguards and some measure of legislative and administrative control, were rejected by Zaghlul Pasha and his followers. This action was followed a year later by important conversations between Adly Pasha and Lord Curzon, the failure of which eventually led to the British unilateral Declaration of 1922. Although this instrument verbally acknowledged the independence of Egypt, its reserved points deprived so-called 'independence' of most of its value, and merely established a new basis for further controversy. Then, in September 1924, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald raised the matter again with Zaghlul Pasha in negotiations which only lasted till the beginning of the following month; and in 1928 Sir Austen Chamberlain negotiated with Sarwat Pasha, whose Ministry was a coalition practically under the control of Zaghlul. Later still, Mr. Henderson met Mahmoud Pasha in 1929, and in the following year continued negotiations much on the same lines with Nahas Pasha, who, like all his predecessors, had to return to Egypt empty-handed.

An examination of the nature of these negotiations reveals one conspicuous fact. In their attempts to compromise with Egypt, the British Government were always late in coming forward with their concessions; and, when these concessions were eventually granted, the Egyptians were no longer prepared to accept them, but



Photo Ri id Shehata Cairo

H M KING FAROUK



THE NILE AT ASSUAN



Photo H. M. Wright No. 311

CAIRO, PLACE SULEIMAN PASHA

had their minds set on something more far-reaching. The Milner negotiations failed partly because the Egyptians insisted upon an official declaration that the Protectorate was at an end, and the British Government refused to make this concession. Yet, six months later, when Adly Pasha agreed to come to London to negotiate with Lord Curzon, he made this declaration a condition of his acceptance and it was granted. If this concession had only been made six months earlier at the Milner-Zaghlul negotiations, there is little doubt that these negotiations would have succeeded. Again, the Curzon-Adly negotiations failed mainly because Lord Curzon took the view that all communications in Egypt—railways, roads, and canals—constituted imperial communications of vital importance to the British Empire, and therefore insisted that the British troops should be free to be stationed anywhere in Egypt, and especially in Cairo and Alexandria. He went back on what Lord Milner had accepted a year before, i.e. that the term 'imperial communications' only applied to the Suez Canal, and that the British troops should be confined to the vicinity of that waterway for its protection. Then, seven years later, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Sarwat Pasha came to terms on practically the same conditions as those approved by Lord Milner with some reservations; and in 1929, in negotiation with Mahmoud Pasha, Mr. Henderson shared the view of Lord Milner that imperial communications were confined to the Suez Canal, and that the British troops should be confined to that area. The Henderson-Mahmoud draft treaty was a great advance in liberality; but, while Zaghlul Pasha would probably have accepted the Milner proposals in 1920 if accompanied by the assurance that the Protectorate was at an end, Nahas Pasha rejected Mr. Henderson's much more liberal terms nine years later.

These various Anglo-Egyptian negotiations had the effect of creating in Egypt a competition for power, based on the terms which each political party was willing to offer or accept. It was only natural that the party making the greatest demands of the British Government should

make the greatest appeal to the Egyptian electors. Hence, the Treaty issue provided a continuous supply of fuel for political unrest in Egypt.

After the Declaration of 1922, the Anglo-Egyptian controversy hinged chiefly on the four reserved points. Egyptian grievances were based on military occupation by a foreign Power ; interference in Egyptian internal affairs in the interests of foreigners ; and the inferior participation of Egypt in the affairs of the Sudan. Although the Egyptians realized the benefits of British protection, the means by which this was assured was humiliating to the natural pride of a so-called independent nation with the most ancient traditions. The military occupation was probably the sorest point, and one which was quite understandable. It was humiliating to Egyptians that foreign troops in uniform should be conspicuous in the streets of their principal cities, and that they should be quartered in the ancient citadel of Cairo. This was to the Egyptians much the same as it would be to us in England if French or Italian troops were stationed in the Tower of London. They also resented the fact that these troops could be used to enforce British interference with their internal affairs for the protection of foreigners, who made fortunes out of the country and were practically exempt from all taxation. This feeling was naturally intensified when on occasions it was found necessary to send British warships to Alexandria.

Although it was largely a question of legitimate prestige, the privileged status of foreigners contributed in no small degree to Egyptian resentment. It is no exaggeration to say that it was possible for a foreign resident in Egypt to be a wealthy man all his life and to die a millionaire, and yet neither during his life, nor at his death, to contribute one solitary piastre towards the administration, whose protection safeguarded his wealth for himself and his heirs. The revenues of the Egyptian Government were mainly derived from the land tax, which meant that the poor Egyptian peasant had practically been paying for the whole upkeep of the State. Although the system of

Capitulations was a grave injustice to the people of modern Egypt, it was impossible to abolish these relics of a former age without the consent of all the Capitulatory Powers.

In the Sudan the Egyptians were in a position of inferiority in matters of administration and defence, as well as in commercial and immigration questions. The Condominium of 1899 existed only in name, as the Sudan was to all intents and purposes a British Protectorate with the recognition of certain Egyptian privileges. Although Great Britain had declared Egypt to be an independent sovereign State, the Egyptians were surrounded on all sides by glaring evidence that their country was in reality little more independent than at the time of the British Protectorate. This was, of course, fully realized by the British Government, but there was a reluctance on their part to put sufficient trust in the Egyptians to enable the restrictions on their full independence to be removed. The vital need of safeguarding British imperial interests obscured the benefits to be derived from trusting Egypt. The natural pride of the Egyptian people, with its good and valuable qualities, was not taken sufficiently into account. It has only now been realized that a fully independent Egypt, proud of her capacity for independent achievement and of her alliance with Great Britain, can be relied upon to uphold her national prestige and to follow what she knows to be the course of her true interests. There is indeed proof already that the help of our now independent Egyptian ally, freely given, is more beneficial than the reluctant assistance of an Egypt under British control. The present war has shown that the trust we have given the Egyptians has not been misplaced.

In the autumn of 1935 there was a general desire of all parties in Egypt to reach an understanding with Great Britain, and this was everywhere manifest during my visit to Cairo and Alexandria, at that time. Yet the British Government were disinclined to enter into negotiations, believing that this was merely an attempt to profit from the situation created by the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.

Fortunately, the situation so developed that these suspicions were dissipated, and the British Government realized that such an opportunity should not be ignored. After the usual preliminary shufflings, the delegates applied themselves to a task of many months in the most favourable circumstances. Among the reasons contributing to their success was the changed situation in the Red Sea and Upper Nile regions brought about by the Italian campaign in Ethiopia. As a proportion of the Nile waters have their source in Ethiopia, anything affecting that country was a matter of concern both to the Egyptians and the Sudanese, especially when Ethiopia came under the control of a European Power. This not only facilitated a settlement of the outstanding questions in Anglo-Egyptian relations, but also made possible an agreement on the question of the Sudan. Also, Nahas Pasha, the Wafdist Prime Minister at the time, made it possible for the British Government to negotiate with an Egyptian Delegation representing nearly every political party, and during the negotiations succeeded in keeping them together. He worked throughout with a spirit of give and take, which was reciprocated on the British side by Sir Miles Lampson. Nevertheless, the fact that circumstances made the conclusion of a Treaty most desirable to both countries went far to bring about its realization.

There is, however, another important factor to be taken into account. Considering the position since the Declaration of 1922, a great deal of preparation was necessary both in this country and in Egypt to bring about the necessary degree of mutual knowledge and understanding. In Egypt there was a reluctance to appreciate British needs ; in England there was a disinclination to realize Egyptian feelings. Many Englishmen knew Egypt, but few had the privilege of knowing the Egyptian people. Fortunately, Dr. Hafez Afifi Pasha, for many years Egyptian Minister and later first Egyptian Ambassador in London, had devoted much hard work to fostering a feeling of friendship and understanding between the two countries, and he succeeded in earning the highest respect of all those

who came in contact with him. There is no doubt that Afifi Pasha's incessant labours, on the economic side as well as politically, did a great deal to prepare the way for the conclusion of the Treaty, and this is fully recognized in England. Since 1922 there had been a gradual but marked improvement in mutual understanding, and it is only fair to say that the effort had been made chiefly on the part of the Egyptians.

On 26 August 1936 in the Locarno Room of the Foreign Office, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance was signed, and this stands out as the most important event in the relations between Great Britain and Egypt since the Egyptians were relieved of the suzerainty of Turkey. In view of the vicissitudes through which these relations have passed, and the continuous crop of difficulties which have stood in the way of agreement satisfactory to both sides, this settlement may be regarded as a remarkable achievement. Throughout recent years, there has always been both in Egypt and in this country a wish to reach a satisfactory settlement, and the difficulty has been to find means of reconciling the Egyptian desire for complete independence with British interests at a vital point for communications with India and the Far East. At last, the means of bringing together these hitherto irreconcilable claims had been found, to the great satisfaction of those who in both countries had worked constantly towards this end. Just as force of circumstances had for a long time made settlement impossible, so force of circumstances of another kind had now stepped in to make agreement possible. If the length of the negotiations in Cairo and Alexandria was ample proof of the difficulties encountered, it also showed the determination on both sides to reach the object of their endeavours. Considering what had gone before, the treaty was a great personal triumph for Nahas Pasha, which made a profound impression in this country and was regarded as holding out good prospects for the future.

The principal articles of the Treaty provided a settlement of the four reserved points in the Declaration of

1922. The military articles agreed to the transfer of the British garrisons from Cairo and Alexandria to the Canal zone, where the Egyptian Government would provide quarters and all improvements necessary for their accommodation. There the British military force, limited to 10,000 land troops and 400 air pilots, would remain until such time as both Governments agreed that the Egyptian Army was capable of taking their place as guardians of navigation in the Canal. If at the end of twenty years, the present period of the Treaty, the Governments do not agree as to whether the Egyptian Army is fit to defend the Canal, the matter may be referred to the League Council or such other body as may be mutually agreed upon. The training of the Egyptian Army is facilitated by a British Military Mission, British armaments are to be exclusively used, and the British personnel serving with the Egyptian Army have been withdrawn. Full provision was made for Anglo-Egyptian collaboration in case of war or in case of emergency, and the form of Egyptian assistance was specifically laid down. In either of these contingencies, Egypt was to give Great Britain the use of ports, aerodromes, and means of communication, and would provide all the legislative and administrative assistance in her power. Military roads and railways are being constructed or improved at considerable cost to facilitate the quick concentration of British and Egyptian troops as circumstances may demand. Adequate provision was made for the training of the British Air Force and military formations, both of which were to be stronger than was originally intended, and could be increased not only in the event of war, but during the period of danger or apprehended national emergency. When war came, the Egyptians did not actually declare war on Germany, but carried out their side of the Treaty obligations to the best of their ability.

The Treaty provided for a permanent Alliance between Great Britain and Egypt, subject to revision in detail as circumstances demand, but continuously preserving the principles of mutual assistance and military co-operation

in the event of attack upon either country. Owing to the changed situation brought about by the greatly increased value of aircraft, the time needed to complete the agreed changes, and the possibility of a British naval base in Cyprus, the military side of the Treaty is believed to provide adequate safeguards for British interests and for the protection of Egypt. The contention that the British Government has given away what is vital to our interests is short-sighted. If we have given, we have received something better in return. Wholehearted Egyptian support is much more valuable to British imperial interests than half-hearted co-operation.

The protection of foreigners is now entrusted to the Egyptian Government, and in the course of five years from the date of the Treaty the city police will become free of European personnel. This will eliminate the international factor from the Egyptian pastime of political 'street scrapping,' and quite possibly deprive this form of entertainment of one of its most alluring features. The British Government also recognized that the Capitulations were no longer in accordance with the spirit of the times and the present state of Egypt. The Treaty, therefore, made it possible for Egypt, with British support, to approach the Capitulatory Powers with two suggestions. The first proposal was that the existing restrictions on Egyptian sovereignty in applying Egyptian legislation (including financial legislation) to foreigners should be discontinued. The second was that a transitional regime should be introduced for a reasonable period, during which the Mixed Tribunals would remain and exercise, besides their present jurisdiction, the jurisdiction of the former Consular Courts. At the end of this period, the Egyptian Government would be free to dispense with the Mixed Tribunals. The Capitulations were abolished by the Convention of Montreux, which came into force on 15 October 1937. The Convention laid down that the Mixed Courts, with much amplified jurisdiction, should remain for another twelve years and be brought to an end on 14 October 1949. During this period, known as the

'Transitional Period,' the different laws of the country will be indiscriminately applied to natives and foreigners alike. In the matter of fiscal legislation, it was agreed that in no circumstances shall there be discrimination against foreigners residing in Egypt.

In the Sudan the British Government has gone far to satisfy Egyptian wishes. While the welfare of the Sudanese is recognized on both sides to be the primary consideration, the Condominium of 1899 is given a new lease of life. Egyptian candidates now have an equal chance of obtaining appointments in the Sudan services, for which there are no suitable Sudanese applicants. Egyptian troops once more participate in the defence of a country for which they have bravely fought in the past. Egyptian officers now assist the Governor-General in the discharge of his duties. In questions of commerce and immigration there is no longer any discrimination between British and Egyptian subjects. In view of the remainder of the Treaty, it is difficult to see how exception can be taken to any of these provisions. Among other arrangements were those for the appointment of Ambassadors in London and Cairo, and for Egypt's application, with British support, for membership of the League of Nations. To this partially decomposed body at Geneva any differences arising over the interpretation or application of the Treaty are to be referred, and this presents a questionable feature of the Agreement. It is surely in the interests of all concerned that the League Council in its present state should never be called upon to make decisions regarding any terms of this Treaty, and certainly not to decide on the ability of the Egyptian Army to defend what the text describes as 'an essential means of communication between different parts of the British Empire.'

The last three years have seen the opening of a new era for Egypt, brought about by important events within her frontiers and dramatic changes within the north-east corner of Africa to which she belongs. These two sets of events, taking place more or less at the same time, have changed the face of Egypt's internal and external policy.

The death of King Fuad, in April 1936, marked the end of a transition period in the history of Egypt; and no sooner had the Council of Regency been set up to tide over the time until the young King Farouk attained his majority, than negotiations were started for the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. With this, Egypt obtained the complete independence which has been the object of all her governments since she was released from the yoke of the Turkish Sultans. But, this enhancement of her position in the world carries with it important responsibilities, the diligent discharge of which is essential to Egyptian as well as British interests. She has had to carry out definite defensive measures, construct roads and railways, and build barracks, involving considerable expenditure. Egypt is now responsible for the protection of foreigners within her frontiers. But the greatest responsibility of all is the necessity of working out her own destiny in Africa and setting her house in order without the guidance of British advisers.

Except in so far as she is bound by the terms of the Treaty, Egypt has now a perfectly free hand. It is no longer a matter of British interest what party is in power in Egypt or what domestic policy this party pursues, although the British Ambassador in Cairo is always ready to help with advice if asked to do so. The internal affairs of Egypt are now in the hands of the Egyptians themselves. As a result of this there is a noticeable consciousness on the part of Egyptian Ministers and officials of all grades that they are now standing on their own feet, and they are obviously anxious that their own efforts should succeed. Above all, they are determined to carry out the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in spirit as well as in letter, and to show the British people that their trust in Egypt has not been misplaced. Hence the Egyptians are, at present, susceptible to any British move that might be construed as interference with their internal affairs. Although many ministries and departments must suffer from the loss of British advisers and administrative officials, it is in many cases remarkable to see the enthu-

siasm of Egyptian officials for their complete responsibility in the conduct of their affairs. Making due allowance for Oriental methods of doing things, there is no doubt that serious efforts are being made in all ministries and departments to make Egypt worthy of the complete independence which she has now attained. The natural pride of the Egyptians in their country, in themselves, and in the trust which Great Britain has placed in them, should go a long way towards ensuring the success of their efforts. A recent visit to Egypt created the impression that with all their mistakes, the Egyptians had learnt as much in one year of complete independence as they would have done in five more years of the previous regime. As this would not have been possible ten years ago, much credit is due to the services of those who have acted as British advisers.

Although to every Egyptian national independence is a highly cherished possession, the feeling of the people as a whole towards Great Britain is now one of close friendship and respect. This was already the case before the outbreak of war. It was noticeable in most sections of the community, although there was at one time a strong feeling in some quarters about Britain's attitude towards the Arabs of Palestine. The Egyptians feel that Britain is there as an ally in case of need, and that British support now guarantees Egyptian independence without interfering with it. The old game of bickering with Britain is dead, and has been replaced by a much healthier occupation—that of trying to make Egypt as self-reliant as possible, and to improve social conditions as well as local industries, communications, and trade. The Egyptians also want to increase and extend their country's influence throughout North-East Africa, and to co-operate with other countries for mutual benefit. Most important to them is the decision of Great Britain and Italy to pursue policies of political and economic co-operation in Africa ; for recent progress in civil aviation and motor transport has increased Egypt's geographical significance as a transit country between north and south, as well as between east and west.

During the last four years, Italy's action in Ethiopia has caused considerable apprehension in Egypt, and this feeling was intensified by the large number of Italian troops in Libya, which seemed to be far in excess of the numbers required for the defence of that country. As these events caused a high degree of tension between Great Britain and Italy, many Egyptians feared that British and Italian interests were irreconcilable and began to think of a clash of armed forces in which Egypt would be the battleground. They foresaw a threat to their western frontier from the direction of Libya, danger to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in the south, interference with the waters of the Blue Nile, and difficulties in connexion with the Suez Canal. This fear, however, was until recently not shared by more responsible ministers, who realized that, if Italy's new position in Africa was strategically unfavourable to Egypt, the Sudan, and the Nile Valley, its communications were most vulnerable the whole way from the shores of Italy to the ports of her new Empire. Moreover, all her traffic had to pass through the Suez Canal. These ministers also realized that Britain and Italy had to be either on the best or worst of terms, and that the latter was in the long run unthinkable.

Even before the signature of the Anglo-Italian Agreement I was assured on high authority that Egypt was in no way adversely affected by Italy's occupation of Ethiopia ; but that, on the other hand, there were prospects of economic benefit arising from Italy's expansion in Africa. The general opinion in the Ministries of Cairo at that time was that the time had come for co-operation for mutual benefit. On my return to Cairo, after the signature of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, all fears had been dissipated, and opinion was practically unanimous in its appreciation of the comprehensive and definite nature of the settlement. In view of this, there was a strong desire to co-operate with the Italians and to find a way of overcoming difficulties. It was only with the outbreak of hostilities in Europe that these fears rose again, but to subside to some

extent as the non-belligerent attitude of Italy became more convincing.

Comparatively recent events brought about a great change in the whole Egyptian outlook, and the coming of a young and popular king at this propitious moment for modern Egypt provided an exhilarating tonic. It is no exaggeration to say that the King is adored by his subjects, and that his name is glorified by the *fellaheen* the whole way from Alexandria to Wadi Halfa. Wherever he goes he is hailed by multitudes, who regard his happy manner and smiling young face as an excellent omen for a country at last blessed with complete independence. The last time I had seen gathering crowds in Cairo, it was in the days of disturbances ; now they mark the enthusiasm of the people to line the streets and welcome their King, and they take up their positions many hours before he is due to pass. On the anniversary of his accession two years ago, crowds were already collecting in Abdin Square on the preceding afternoon.

On the recent occasion when I had the honour of being received in audience by His Majesty, the King was seated at his desk, and as he rose to receive me a cheerful and most informal smile lit his face. His attitude was one of ' So glad to see you, come and sit down.' The English he spoke was perfect, and I had the greatest difficulty in realizing that I was not sitting and talking to a young Englishman just ' down from Oxford.' He smiled and chatted, and it was obvious that he thought life a good thing. Although only eighteen years of age, Farouk looks some years older. He is tall, broad-shouldered, and good looking, besides having great charm of manner. All the time I was with him I felt that he would have given a good deal to take off his black frock-coat and stiff collar and put on a shirt open at the neck. But with all his gaiety and easy-going manner, the King of Egypt has another side to his character. If he looks upon life as a good thing, this is not only from the point of view of amusement, sport, and having a good time. Farouk has a high sense of his responsibilities, and is supremely anxious to serve

his country to the best of his ability. Fully aware of his immense popularity, Farouk is determined to turn it to the best use. He has come to the throne when Egypt is at last free to work out her own destiny, and at a stage when the development of civil aviation and motor transport is bringing about far-reaching changes in Egypt and neighbouring countries.

His opportunities are great, and the young King is fully alive to the reality of this. When he talks on such subjects, his carefree manner changes into that of a serious and sincere young man. This side of life really appeals to him more than the other. With gaiety and humour for the world in general as occasion demands, this highly promising monarch looks upon kingship as a serious business, demanding his full time and the best he has to give in soul, mind, and body.

The King's sincere devotion to his father, the late King Fuad, is of the deep human variety and has much influence over his life. His father's death was a great blow to him, and his devotion to his memory urges him to do all he can to honour his inheritance. There are, however, many ways in which Farouk's attitude to his people differs widely from that of his predecessor. While King Fuad kept aloof from the people except when he appeared at public functions in his purely Royal capacity, his son regards himself as one of the people and mixes with them freely. It is quite a common occurrence for Farouk to slip out of the Abdin Palace and become a man of the street in Cairo ; he talks to the humblest of his subjects and learns what they are thinking about. He also mixes in the crowds at football matches and hears about everything that is going on, and he is often to be found having long chats with private soldiers of the Egyptian Army. This, almost more than anything else, has endeared him to the masses, who have never before experienced such a thing. The people regard him as one of themselves, and the bringer of an entirely new era.

Farouk's anxiety to learn everything he can about people and things has made him a lover of books, and he takes

special interest in building up a private library containing volumes of his own choice and collection. When in England as Crown Prince, he was often to be seen poking about the second-hand bookshops of the Charing Cross Road. He takes delight in knowing more than his ministers and advisers, and on occasion takes infinite trouble to find out some intricate piece of information with which to surprise them.

In dealing with his Government, Farouk is very much the King of Egypt. He strongly favours democracy, but of a kind suitable to his own country. While anxious to do everything to improve the social conditions of his more unfortunate subjects, he has already acquired the knowledge—perhaps it is inborn—that some Western ideas can do harm in an Oriental country. He will have none of this, and wants to guide his Governments and people into a way of life suitable to their particular needs and conducive to their prosperity. When he has made up his mind with the help of his advisers, his course is set and is not easily disturbed.

The King owes much to his English education ; to his Egyptian training under the able guidance of Sheikh Maraghi, Rector of Al Azhar University in Cairo ; and to the companionship in work and play of Hassanein Pasha, the famous explorer and geographer, who is now Governor of the Royal Household. Hassanein Pasha, who is Sir Ahmed Hassanein in England, has been described as one of the most perfect links between East and West. As such, and in many other capacities, he has long been a most valuable servant to the Royal House of Egypt. Sheikh Maraghi continues to be one of the King's most influential advisers. Owing to his impartial outlook and sound judgment, this man of striking but gentle personality is a source of strength and leadership in the world of Islam to-day.

Farouk's opportunities are to be found chiefly in his youth, popularity, and diligence at a time when great changes are developing. At such a time, it is essential that Egypt should be united, and here the King's influence

can do a great deal. Although the Egyptians cannot be expected altogether to abandon what is second nature to them, their interests in party politics has been largely eclipsed by their affection for the King, and many of its unsavoury aspects put in the shade. Reduced to a few words, the King can control the party political game ; he can lead Egypt, united in loyalty to himself and at one in a desire to profit from progress and co-operation with others.

Ever since the European Powers began to set foot in modern Egypt, foreigners have played an important part in the development and prosperity of the country. Indeed, without them, Egypt could never have risen to her present position in the world. A considerable share of Egypt's prosperity is due to the Greeks. Hence there are several large European communities firmly implanted in Egypt, and their respective nations in Europe have varying degrees of interest in the country. At the time of the census of 1927, the foreign residents numbered 225,000, of whom 76,264 were Greeks, 56,462 Italians, 34,169 British, 24,332 French, and 38,373 others. For the purposes of this narrative, it is only necessary to take into account the interests of Great Britain, France, and Italy. French interests are chiefly confined to the administration of the Suez Canal, large financial interests, and shipping in the Mediterranean as well as via the Suez Canal. In many kinds of constructional work, the Italians have long rendered valuable service to Egypt. In Cairo, a city which is rapidly increasing in size and importance, a large proportion of the new blocks of flats and dwelling houses are Italian built, while among the less modern buildings to their credit are the National Museum of Egyptian Antiquities (famous for the Tutankhamen treasures) and the Hotel Continental. They are also largely responsible for the actual constructional work of the Assuan Dam, sub-contracts being given to Italian firms by the original British contractors. Besides this, the Italians conduct extensive business in banking and insurance, and supply a considerable number of artisans

and workmen. It is, therefore, apparent that the Italians are in a favourable position to participate in such development schemes as Egypt may carry out to meet the needs of changing conditions over a large African area.

The Egyptians naturally want their country with its capital to be the centre of gravity of as many North-East African interests as possible ; and they will undoubtedly make use of foreign experts and make transit concessions if this is likely to bring benefit in other directions. While Egypt has important trading interests, especially those connected with cotton, with all three European Powers, she has a special interest in Italian East Africa on account of the Blue Nile, and the possibility of building a dam at Lake Tana to store water for release at the time when it is most needed. In the Anglo-Italian Agreement definite assurances were given safeguarding Egyptian interests in this respect, although the procedure to be followed remained to be discussed. As this matter will be dealt with in greater detail later on,¹ suffice it to say here that the discharge from the lake at the highest flood-time does not exceed one-fiftieth part of the total volume of water entering Egypt ; and that physical conditions make it impossible to prevent the water of Lake Tana from reaching the Nile and the Sudan. Most of the Blue Nile water entering Egypt comes from tributaries flowing into the river below Lake Tana. The Italian Lake Tana boggy is, therefore, psychological rather than real, and the Egyptian authorities are now perfectly satisfied in this respect.

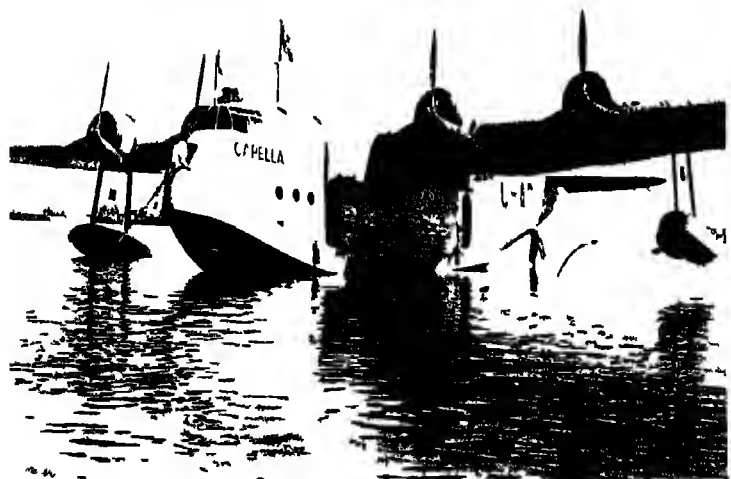
Although British relations with Egypt have undergone many changes since the time of Lord Cromer, our policy with regard to that country is inflexible. The introduction of the Protectorate, the granting of partial independence in 1922, and the Alliance with full independence in 1936, have merely been different means of carrying out the same policy. On the occasion of the Declaration of 1922 the British Government informed the Powers that :

‘ The termination of the British Protectorate over

¹ *Vide* Chapter VII.



ITALIAN SEAPLANE AT VICTORIA



Pict Imperial Airways

BRITISH FLYING-BOAT, IMPERIAL AIRWAYS



EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT MISR AIRWORK



THE DESERT ROAD

CAIRO-ALEXANDRIA

Egypt involves no change in the *status quo* as regards the position of other Powers in Egypt. The welfare and integrity of Egypt are necessary to the peace and safety of the British Empire, which will therefore always maintain as an essential British interest the special relations between itself and Egypt long recognized by other Governments ; and in calling attention to these special relations, as defined in the Declaration recognizing Egypt's independence, we propose to declare that we will not admit them to be questioned by any other Powers, that we will regard as an unfriendly act any attempt at interference in the affairs of Egypt by any other Power, and that we will consider any aggression against the territory of Egypt as an act to be repelled by all the means at our command.'

The warnings embodied in this statement of policy are as real to-day as they were in 1922, and the issue with regard to Egypt is certainly one on which the British people are unanimously prepared to fight.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESS IN EGYPT

HITHERTO, politics have overshadowed almost everything else in Egypt to the detriment of constructive progress. Now there are definite signs that economics, commerce, and material progress are throwing politics into the shade. This is partly due to the disappearance of the 'Treaty issue' and a change of outlook arising from complete independence, and partly owing to the influence in Africa of a progressive Italy. While hitherto nearly all the public services connected with Egypt have been in the hands of foreign companies, there has arisen a strong movement to bring as much of this as possible within the control of the Egyptians themselves.

Although the Egyptian State Railways have until quite recently been virtually under British control, it is now ten years since the Egyptians began to form a mercantile marine of their own. The Alexandria Navigation Company, established in 1930 with a capital of £E.20,000 and a Government subsidy, was followed in 1934 by the Misr Sea Navigation Company, and in 1937 by the Pharaonic Mail Company. These three steamship companies maintained services with Mediterranean and Red Sea ports, while the Misr Sea Navigation Company also runs an efficient service for passengers and cargo between Alexandria and Europe. This not only gives Egypt a footing among the maritime nations of the world, but enables the Egyptian flag to be flown in many places where it would never otherwise be seen. In these days of newspaper and wireless propaganda of doubtful reputation the time-honoured and honest method of flying the

national flag at sea is apt to be overshadowed. The Egyptians, however, have realized its value to a nation trying to build up her position in the modern world, especially to one holding an important place as far as world shipping is concerned.

Nor are the Egyptians behindhand in the matter of civil aviation. The Misr Airwork Company has been operating since 1932 with a capital of £E.40,000 and a Government subsidy of approximately £E.60,000 per annum. Daily air services have been maintained from Cairo to Alexandria, Port Said, and Assiut, and twice-weekly services in the winter season to Luxor and Assuan. There has also been a regular twice-weekly service to Baghdad and a daily service to Palestine and Syria. Although most of the pilots are British, this is only a temporary measure until a sufficient number of good and reliable Egyptian pilots are available. That the air appeals to young Egyptians is obvious to any visitor to the Almaza Aerodrome at Heliopolis, where there is every facility for training under favourable conditions.

As, apart from the cultivation of cotton, Egypt's future seems to be based largely on her position as a transit country, it is significant that the Egyptians are now paying more and more attention to transport questions. They see the ships of all nations calling at their ports on their way to and from all parts of the Eastern Hemisphere, and they see great passenger aeroplanes and flying-boats landing and taking off on their swift flights to and from distant lands of Africa and Asia. There has also been a rapid closing up of the distances separating their country from Europe, and the more southerly regions of the Nile. Passengers and mails from England reach Egypt in little more than one day, and letters posted in Cairo can be delivered in Khartoum on the following day. The fact that this dramatic speed-up has superseded a week's journey from England to Egypt and four days from Cairo to Khartoum, has not yet been fully grasped by the British public. The

Egyptians, on the other hand, are much more directly affected and are becoming more and more alive to the great significance of these changes. They do not want their country to become just a 'landing-ground' for foreign aircraft or a mere stretch of territory providing space for foreign navigation through the Suez Canal. They want to participate in the forward movement of African and Mediterranean transport, whether it be by sea, land, or air. Yet the movement to throw off foreign control over public utility services had already begun before it received encouragement from the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty.

According to the terms of the Treaty the Egyptians are under the obligation to build certain roads for strategical purposes, and there is little doubt that after the war the benefit of this development will be felt in many directions quite apart from the primary object for which the roads were intended. Hitherto, road communications in Egypt have been deplorable, and it is only recently that a good road has been constructed from Cairo to Alexandria. Now the Egyptians have seen what roads can do for a difficult country such as Ethiopia, and this has directed their thoughts to road possibilities in their own country. Also, a proud people do not like to see themselves outdone in a hitherto more backward part of their own continent. The possibilities in Egyptian road-building are immense, and the demands of modern motor transport may give rise to great opportunities of financial benefit from improved land communications with the south. The motor transport service for passengers and mails between Damascus and Baghdad, started nearly sixteen years ago, is an example of what can be done by this means to overcome the desert spaces. To-day the possibilities are even greater, and there is no saying what road transport may achieve in Egypt and farther south with the help of the most expert road builders in the world. In any case the improvement of local communications will give a new stimulus to Egyptian industries,

which have been gradually pushing forward since the time of the Great War.

When Egypt became a base for operations in Palestine and Salonika, the presence of Allied forces on Egyptian soil created a demand for a large assortment of commodities. Naturally the Egyptians put forward every effort to benefit from a situation calling for local industries to supplement the meagre supply of foreign manufactured articles. At the end of hostilities it was fortunate that there were some industries to absorb an ever-increasing population, all of which could not possibly be employed in the cultivation of cotton. As soon as it was realized that industries in Egypt would not only help to absorb those who could not find work on the land, but would also be a step towards economic independence, action was taken to create what is now the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Cairo. Since its beginning in 1920 the activities of this Ministry have been extended to cover a great variety of subjects, and industrial and technical education has progressed so as to meet the demand of industrial development. In 1936-7 there were 17,409 students receiving this form of education. The whole object of the Ministry is to encourage Egyptian industries, development, and trade by all reasonable means, and to co-operate with other ministries with this end in view. The degree of success already achieved is considerable, and this Ministry is looking well to the future.

The year 1930 was the turning-point in industrial development; for it was then that Egypt acquired her full liberty in the formulation of a tariff policy. Without some measure of protection Egyptian industries did not stand a chance of fulfilling the objects for which they were intended. This change gave a new impetus to production and more confidence to local enterprises. This is manifest in the number of industrial joint-stock companies now affiliated to the Bank Misr. These are engaged in work such as cotton-ginning, cotton-spinning and weaving, silk weaving, linen printing, fisheries, transport, shipping,

aviation, tourism, and insurance. The total paid-up capital of these companies is now £E.2,327,000. The Bank Misr itself started business in 1920 with a modest capital of £E.80,000, which has now been increased to £E.1,000,000 with a reserve fund of £E.690,362 and deposits amounting to £E.3,913,926. The capital of the joint-stock companies as well as that of the bank itself is held entirely by Egyptians, who also form the entire staff in both cases.

The increase of industries in recent years is reflected in the rapid growth of the towns. In 1917 Cairo had a population of 800,000 and there were only six towns in the whole country with between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. In 1927 there were nine towns in this category, and the population of Cairo had risen to 1,065,000. To-day Cairo is known to have reached approximately the one and half million figure. In a country which has always been regarded as essentially agricultural, these figures are most significant as pointers to the future.

The industries connected with cotton are ginning, pressing, spinning, and weaving, the two former processes being carried out by local factories equipped with up-to-date machinery. The entire cotton crop, which in 1936-7 amounted to 881,893,854 lb., is exported with the exception of about 5 per cent, which is retained for spinning and weaving in Egypt. The aggregate output of yarn is about 36 million lb. per annum, which is consumed locally with the exception of a small export of 1½ million lb. Although Egypt's output of cotton piece goods now amounts to 83 million yards per annum, this only meets about 30 per cent of the home demand. As the remaining 70 per cent has to be imported from abroad, the opportunities of expanding this industry are more than obvious. Next in order of importance come the silk, woollen, and linen industries. The output of woven silk amounts to about 15 million metres per annum, and is of superior quality and fineness. The woollen industry is

still in its infancy, with an annual output of about 500,000 lb. of yarn, and Egypt still has to import woollen yarn for the 'tarboush' industry and for the manufacture of rugs and blankets. But a joint-stock company has recently been formed for the making of woollen cloth for suitings. For the manufacture of linen there is so far only one large factory equipped with up-to-date machinery, which produces about 661,000 lb. of yarn annually for weaving locally.

The production of cotton seed in 1936-7 amounted to 732,776 tons, of which 75,746 tons were used as seed for the following cotton crop, 329,967 tons were exported, and 309,639 tons were pressed locally. The oil extracted therefrom amounted to 55,018 tons, leaving 268,695 tons of oil-cake. The cotton-seed oil is partly consumed by the soap industry, which has now reached an annual output of 45,000 tons, valued at £E.1,000,000, and meets 90 per cent of the home demand. The production of sugar in Egypt is more than sufficient for local needs, and gives about 66,500 tons of molasses per annum for the local distillation of alcohol as well as for export purposes. It is also interesting to note that flour milling, the oldest industry in Egypt, is now being completely modernized. The 1936-7 wheat crop, amounting to 1,234,950 tons, was ground in the country; and Egypt is now almost self-supporting in cereals, especially wheat and maize.¹

It is unnecessary to deal with the remaining industries such as tobacco (Egyptian cigarettes), hides and skins, matches, glass, cements, minerals, and fisheries. What has been described is sufficient to show that Egypt is no longer content to export large quantities of cotton, and to import practically everything else, including piece goods manufactured abroad from Egyptian cotton. She has now set her head to the establishment of industries to meet as far as possible her various needs, and thereby to

¹ The figures are, of course, pre-war.

reduce her imports. Although this policy, together with the tariffs introduced to protect her industries, must affect older producing countries, Egypt cannot be blamed for looking after her own interests as long as her tariffs are fair and reasonable.

Another development in recent years has been a determined attempt to make the agricultural wealth of the country not quite so dependent on the success of the cotton crop. Raw cotton, together with cotton seed, cotton-seed oil, and cotton-seed cake, make up 80 per cent of Egypt's exports. Steps have been taken to cultivate for export products such as oranges and mandarines, and to control the export of rice, onions, and eggs in order to ensure a high standard of quality. Similar efforts are being made in other directions, the result of which is a gradually increasing safeguard against the calamity of a bad cotton crop.

While this agricultural policy is calculated to introduce more stability to the economic position of Egypt, industrial development has been stimulating progress in many different directions. With the growth of the urban populations there has been a greater demand for education, social services, labour legislation, and all that goes to further the welfare of a more civilized people. That important progress has been made in these questions during the last decade is unquestionable, but there is still a great deal to be done. Public health and the standard of living are still deplorable throughout the greater part of Egypt. The Egyptian Government, now free to carry out their own plans, are facing this task with enthusiasm and seem determined to make Egypt worthy of her new position in the world. They also realize the increasing importance of their country in the future of North-East Africa, and foresee the influence of increased industry and better internal communications on the general standard of Egyptian life. The man who works in a factory will no longer be content to live in a filthy hovel, especially when he comes in closer contact

with European ways of living and has more money to spend.

Although many of the movements which I have tried to describe have received a strong encouragement from the outcome of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, to the accession of a young and popular monarch, and from the remarkable transport developments of recent years, there has been gradual progress in Egypt ever since the Declaration of 1922. As the most vital need for Egypt is water for the cultivation of her crops, it was only natural that irrigation should have been one of the first considerations of successive Egyptian governments. Even during the serious economic crisis it was made possible to continue work on various important Nile projects. Besides the great scheme of building the Nag Hamadi Barrage and the heightening of the Assuan Dam, many miles of canals were constructed for introducing the system of perennial irrigation into parts of the country previously without this advantage ; and large pumping stations were erected to assist in the drainage of the low-lying lands of the Delta. In agriculture, research work was continuously carried on to study the problem of parasites and insect pests affecting the Egyptian crops, while schemes were worked out for the improvement of seeds and introduction of new plants. The railway system not only maintained the high standard of efficiency for which it is well known, but new lines were opened and train services considerably improved between the most important centres. Previous to 1922 there were practically no roads in Egypt in the European sense of the term, so a beginning was made to build roads through the desert such as the motor roads from Cairo to Suez and from Cairo to the Fayoum.

In such departments as those of education, medical services, and hygiene, progress was most marked, in spite of the serious difficulties standing in the way of such progress in a country like Egypt. Important reforms were also carried out in the laws governing marriage and

divorce. When the Egyptian Constitution was first drawn up, steps were taken to ensure compulsory education, and this principle was adhered to so consistently that now there are few villages without an elementary school for both boys and girls. It was calculated that by 1945 every Egyptian child between the ages of eight and thirteen would benefit from the advantages of elementary education. While the estimates for the Ministry of Education were under half a million in 1917, they had risen by 1927 to £E.2,478,000, and during that decade the number of pupils rose from 323,517 to 841,000 in schools belonging to or subsidized by the State. The University of Cairo, founded in 1908, was incorporated as a State University in 1924; and, although still in its infancy, there is every reason to anticipate its development according to the hopes of its founders.

In the sphere of education, no one worked harder in Egypt than the late King Fuad, who was not only a distinguished scholar but also a vigorous and determined administrator. It was in the work of founding the Egyptian University that Prince Fuad performed the most important work of his early years. He also reformed the Geographical Society, which now enjoys a high reputation wherever geography is known and studied; founded the Institute of Hydrobiology; and created by his own personal initiative the Society of Political Economy, Statistics, and Legislation, which is to-day a most vigorous and progressive scientific body. Indeed, if the truth be known, there exists scarcely a movement in the interests of true Egyptian progress of which King Fuad was not either the founder or the principal promoter.

Far from content with becoming a Royal Patron, the King took up such work with unflagging enthusiasm, and pulled more than his full weight in trying to achieve the object in view. The part taken by His Majesty personally in the vast and complex task of building up an independent nation was more than his full share. In addition to his active interest in a varied collection of progressive spheres

ranging from the cultivation of Egyptian art to hospitals, Nile barrages and association football, the King was for a decade the backbone of the Egyptian nation. Without him Egypt could never have survived the administrative instability of these critical years. He supplied continuity and stability amidst endless political confusion and served as a rallying point at times when his influence and advice were sorely needed in the best interests of the country. But only when the history of modern Egypt comes to be written by future generations, will the importance of the work done by Ahmed Fuad be fully realized.

At a time when Egypt's position in the Sudan has been strengthened by the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, the Egyptians are anxious to improve communications and stimulate trade between the two countries. These questions are now receiving the close attention of the Sudan Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Cairo, which is recognized as being of a semi-official nature. This committee has its counterpart in connexion with the Chamber of Commerce in Khartoum. There have been exchanges of visits between these two bodies, and a report has been drawn up with definite recommendations. These deal with such questions as unity of communications by rail, telephone, and telegraph, reciprocal preferential tariffs, and arrangements for exhibitions of each other's produce.

The most important of these recommendations concerns the extensions of the Egyptian State Railways from Assuan to Wadi Halfa, a distance of about 208 miles by river, to join the Sudan Railway connexion with Khartoum. As at present the journey from Assuan to Wadi Halfa has to be made by the Sudan Government steamers through Egyptian territory, the Egyptians are naturally anxious to carry out this project. If this railway were constructed, direct rail communication would be established from Alexandria to Kosti on the White Nile (a distance of 1,723 miles) and to Sennar on the Blue Nile (a distance of 1,653),

from which point a line runs east to Gedaref and then north through Kassala to Port Sudan. The main obstacle in connexion with this project is the difficulty of building a railway through the rocky country south of Assuan ; but this would seem to be a minor engineering feat when compared with road building over the mountain ranges of Ethiopia. It is also suggested that the navigation of the Nile between Assuan and Wadi Halfa should be greatly speeded up and carried out by Egyptian steamers. All these proposals are in the right direction, and if carried out would certainly help to bring the Sudan in closer touch with Egypt and Europe.

At present the journey from Egypt to the regions of the Upper Nile means a succession of changes from train to steamer and vice versa. Although this may provide variation and be attractive to tourists, it has serious drawbacks from a commercial point of view. From Cairo the journey is made by train to Assuan ; from Shellal (on the southern side of the Assuan Dam) a steamer, with a paddle-wheel at the stern and barge for natives and merchandise tied alongside, slowly proceeds on its way to Wadi Halfa. The journey takes the best part of two days and two nights. At the frontier town of Wadi Halfa is the northern terminus of the Sudan Government Railways ; and from here to Khartoum is a train journey of twenty-four hours. For a continuation of the journey farther south a change of train is necessary for Kosti (on the White Nile) or Sennar (on the Blue Nile), while steamers have hitherto been the only means of communication with places south of these points. The ordinary steamer takes five and a half days to reach Malakal. In contrast to this the flying-boats of Imperial Airways cover the distance from Khartoum to Malakal in three hours. These, however, are the two extremes of speed and slow movement. For purposes of ordinary trade some form of medium-speed transit is needed ; and this might well be supplied by a service of faster and more up-to-date steamers on the upper reaches of the Nile,

in harmony with a better service of steamers on the Egyptian side between Shellal and Wadi Halfa. These could be supplemented, as circumstances demand, by the building of roads to carry heavy and comparatively fast-moving motor transport. As development progresses, co-operation between the different territories may well lead to some form of rationalization in transport services. In view of the excellent tarmac road which now runs from the frontier of Tunis, along the Libyan coast, to the Egyptian frontier (a distance of about 1140 miles), a road connecting Italian East Africa with Egypt is a possibility of the future.

Apart from the steamships plying between Alexandria and Libyan ports, the only other communications between Egypt and Libya are the Italian air service to Benghazi and the caravan route to the frontier. While the road on the Italian side is finished right up to the Egyptian frontier at Sollum, on the Egyptian side it was recently merely a track. Should this route be opened up commercially, it is possible that some small regular trade may replace Egypt's small supply of agricultural produce for consumption by nomads across the frontier. Although in this region of nomadic tribes the frontier is continually being crossed for grazing and watering purposes, the relations between the Italian and Egyptian officials have been cordial as proved by the lack of incidents. As the frontier control consists of a series of customs posts in a long line of barbed wire, it has been remarkable that the movements of men, animals, and merchandise have not been accompanied by continuous friction. But a closer all-round contact between Egypt and Libya is an important factor in North-East African co-operation. The new road along the coast of the Western Desert of Egypt will open up a part of the country which has hitherto been practically unknown, except to those residents of Alexandria who frequent the attractive bathing beaches at Mersa Matruh and Sollum. This arterial motor-road¹ may link up at the

¹ The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty only provides for a road as far as Mersa Matruh, about 140 miles from the Libyan frontier,

frontier with the great Italian highway stretching along the coast of the Mediterranean as far as the frontier of Tunis.

Besides being of considerable strategic importance to Italy, the coastal regions of Libya have been completely transformed in recent years. They consist of a series of oases thick with date palms and providing possibilities of cultivation on somewhat restricted lines. The remainder of this great expanse of territory is pure desert, except for a few isolated oases where native cultivation is encouraged. As there are no rivers in Libya, cultivation depends entirely on sub-soil water and the use of artesian wells. The Italians are doing everything possible to make the best use of the cultivable lands in the coastal zone, and an increasing number of colonists are settling there in homesteads provided for them in advance. This system of preparing the way for colonists before their arrival is the method which Italy is adopting in Ethiopia, and accounts to a great extent for the delay in the settlement of Italian families in the newly acquired Empire. I have seen what has been done in Libya in this direction, and it is a remarkable achievement in face of great difficulties. It is also an indication of the adaptability and capacity to colonize of the Italian people. What has been done in Libya clearly points to what will be done in Ethiopia in much more favourable circumstances.

The transformation of the towns, such as Tripoli, Homs, Zliten, Misurata, and Benghazi, is remarkable. Not only have the native quarters been thoroughly cleaned up without loss of their Oriental character, but new European towns have been built according to the most modern methods of town-planning. The roads between the principal centres are first-class as in Europe ; the hotels have every modern comfort in the European sense of the term ; and the transport services by motor-coach are efficient and up-to-date. Even the mysterious and isolated oasis town of Ghadames, situated at the

meeting of the frontiers of Algeria, Tunis, and Libya, has an attractive and up-to-date hotel, and is connected with Tripoli by a good motor road with a service of auto-pullmans. All this points to an increasing tourist traffic in the future, and it is possible that the new coastal road and good hotels may induce travellers to use this route as a means of reaching Egypt. They would then be able to see the famous Roman remains of Leptis Magna, Sabratha, and Cyrene. Apart from this, the new communications between Egypt and Libya seem at present to be strategical rather than economic.

As Egyptian communications are improved according to the terms of the Treaty, and national industries progress and become more widespread, Egypt will gradually become in a much better position to fit in with the developments taking place farther south. There is already talk of using for industrial purposes the water-power of the Assuan Dam ; and, if this is successful, there is no saying what further use may be made of the Nile resources. In any case, it is a foregone conclusion that as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the Egyptians' desire to improve their position in the Sudan, trade and transit with that country will improve and be speeded up. Modern aviation leads the way, and causes the Egyptians seriously to think of the possibilities of more rapid transit for all kinds of goods. Once this trade and transit movement south has reached Khartoum, it is more than two-thirds of the way to Italian East Africa.

Yet there seems little chance at present of Egypt being able to provide transit facilities that would relieve Italy of the heavy burden of the Suez Canal dues. Owing to the heavy freight charges over so great a distance, and the necessity of transferring goods from river to rail (in some cases twice over), there would be no saving either in the time or cost of transit. The only way in which Egypt can at present act as a transit country for Italian East Africa is in the matter of commercial aviation,

which is likely to increase to a considerable extent for passengers, mails, and light classes of goods. The Ala Littoria Company already runs four services a week each way between Rome and Addis Abeba via Benghazi, Cairo, Wadi Halfa, Khartoum, and Asmara. But, as soon as adequate landing-grounds have been established in Western Ethiopia and faster machines have been delivered, it is intended to accelerate the service so as to cover the journey in two days instead of four. Cairo will then be 'half-way house' between Italy and Italian East Africa. As far as actual trade is concerned, Egypt's purchases from Ethiopia have been confined to coffee, hides and skins, and a few other articles, while her exports were negligible until the Italian occupation. Since then they have chiefly consisted of fuel for motor transport.

With the southward move of Egyptian interests there is every reason to hope that the Egyptians will find in the Italian development schemes opportunities of considerable commercial benefit. They will be closer at hand to investigate the possibilities of the vast productive region of Western Ethiopia with a view to participating in projects carried out by Italo-foreign development companies. The whole question of the Nile waters under rapidly changing conditions will open up a new vista of possibilities for increased irrigation and cultivation in the Nile Valley. The Italians also stand to benefit greatly from the prolongation of Egyptian interests in their direction. Although most of the great constructional works of Egypt have been carried out by British contractors, the sub-contracts have, in a great many cases, been given to Italian firms. Hence much of the heavy constructional work, including many of the Nile dams and barrages, have been carried out by Italian labour. With further development a continuation of this process would greatly benefit the Italians by providing a means of obtaining sterling currency. The same principle applies to the question of road-building throughout a large and comparatively flat region, where present

communications are entirely insufficient to meet the needs of developments which are beginning to take place. This, however, is only a small part of the larger question of North-East African co-operation which will be dealt with later on.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUEZ CANAL

THE Suez Canal has attracted a large proportion of world shipping to the great waterway extending from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the south-eastern end of the Red Sea. With the expansion of international trade during the last century, and the increase in world shipping, this route to South Africa, India, and the Far East has become of increasing interest to all the maritime Powers. Until recently British shipping has been the great predominant factor on this trade route. In the peak year of 1929, out of a total traffic of 33,466,000 tons, the British tonnage in transit amounted to 19,114,000 tons. Looking back through the years, British tonnage has always topped the list by a great margin in the Suez Canal traffic returns. Now, owing to the serious reduction in British shipping and an increase in the shipping of other nations, the situation is no longer the same. Although British shipping still holds the lead, that of Italy has greatly increased, with Germany and Holland occupying the next places.

Consequently, with the Suez Canal becoming of use to many more nations than formerly, owing to the wider variety of traffic that passes through it, a similar change has taken place with regard to the Powers interested in a free passage through the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Prominent among these is Italy, whose vital need of a free passage in and out of the Mediterranean has now been extended to include a free passage through the Suez Canal and Red Sea to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb and beyond. Hitherto Great Britain has regarded the

Mediterranean as mainly her preserve, and more recently Italy has talked a good deal about *Mare nostrum*. Yet the fact is clear to-day that the whole stretch of water from Gibraltar to Aden must, in modern circumstances,

PROPORTION PER CENT OF THE NUMBER OF VESSELS AND OF THE GROSS AND NET TONNAGE, 1938

<i>Flag</i>	<i>Percentage of Vessels</i>	<i>Percentage of Gross Tonnage</i>	<i>Percentage of Net Tonnage</i>
British .	49.09	50.07	50.43
Italian .	15.94	13.98	13.4
German .	8.09	9.17	9.11
Dutch .	7.71	8.78	8.80
French .	4.21	5.22	5.08
Norwegian .	4.78	4.20	4.31
Greek .	3.22	2.21	2.29
Japanese .	1.62	1.95	1.96
Danish .	1.56	1.36	1.42
American .	1.12	1.10	1.13
Swedish .	0.99	0.91	0.94
Russian .	0.47	0.38	0.40
Yugoslav .	0.31	0.21	0.22
Egyptian .	0.42	0.16	0.16
Finnish .	0.13	0.10	0.10
Panamanian .	0.16	0.10	0.10
Spanish .	0.03	0.05	0.05
Roumanian .	0.05	0.03	0.04
Belgian .	0.05	0.01	0.01
Portuguese .	0.03	0.01	0.01
Estonian .	0.02	(0.003)	(0.003)
	100	100	100

be regarded as an international waterway with free passage for the ships of all nations on equal terms. Of this waterway the Suez Canal forms a vital and complicated part, which needs some explanation.

Although it is my intention that this book should be confined to the realities of the present and the possibilities of the future, it is necessary in the case of the Suez Canal

to understand the foundations on which present conditions are based and future changes to some extent depend. From 1841 onwards the territorial Power in Egypt (and over the Canal when it came to be constructed) was divided. It was under the immediate administration of the Egyptian Government, but subject to the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan. The situation was further complicated by the intervention of the Powers and the want of union among them, and still more so by the rivalry of Great Britain and France on the subject of Egypt and the canal project. Lord Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at this period, opposed the construction of a canal and prevented its beginning for many years. He feared that it might put us at a disadvantage in defending India and be prejudicial to British interests in the Mediterranean, especially as the undertaking was to be in French hands and mainly supported by French capital. When an appeal for capital was floated in 1858, French capitalists were alone in their enthusiasm for the project, eventually subscribing 52 per cent of the 400,000 shares; while Spain and Italy took up 4,161 and 2,719 shares respectively. The remaining 44 per cent was subscribed by the Egyptian Government.

M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the famous Frenchman who worked out the whole plan, was not diverted from his object by this opposition or by other difficulties which he had to meet. After his friend, Said Pasha, had become Viceroy of Egypt in 1854, he obtained from him a concession authorizing the formation of a company for the purpose of making a canal. Such a concession required the sanction of the Sultan to give it full legal validity; and it was not till 1866 that a firman to this effect was granted to the company, and then only with some special conditions attached to it. The Sultan's previous refusal to sanction the scheme was due to the influence of Great Britain over him at the time. De Lesseps, however, had proceeded at once to form a company under the name of the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez*, and had obtained on 5 January 1856 a further

concession by which the Company's powers were determined and its statutes declared. This is regarded as its fundamental charter. These concessions, it should be observed, great as were their political and international consequences, gave the Suez Canal Company simply the status of a private company.

The Concession, which was for ninety-nine years from the time of its opening in 1869, provided for a company to be organized on a strictly international basis, but domiciled in Egypt. Its administrative headquarters was to be in Paris, and as a *Société Anonyme* it was to be governed by the provisions of French law respecting such companies. While the Court of Appeal in Paris was ultimately to deal with cases coming under this law, cases of a local character (including criminal cases) were to come under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian courts. The chairman was to be chosen by the Egyptian Government 'from among shareholders most interested in the enterprise.' Tariff discrimination was not allowed, even in the case of ships plying between Egyptian ports. Three-quarters of the net profits were to go to the shareholders, 15 per cent to the Egyptian Government, and 10 per cent to the 'Founders.' The revenues of the Company come from the tolls and other dues which it is authorized to impose, and the same dues must be levied on the vessels of all nations. The maximum charge is not to exceed 10 francs a ton, estimated either by the capacity of the ship or per head for passengers. The Concession left it to the Company to work out their own system for fixing the ton of capacity, which led to much dispute and a good deal of complication. The result was the creation of the 'Suez Canal ton,' which is greater than the British net tonnage measurement. One of the chief differences between the two systems is that in the former bridge decks and certain other spaces are liable to dues as long as the ship in question sails the seas, if goods have been carried in them on one single occasion. It was also laid down in the Concession that the Canal with its ports (Port Said and Port Tewfik) should always be open as a

neutral passage to every merchant ship without distinction, exclusion, or preference with regard to persons or nationalities. The only conditions were that they paid the dues and obeyed the regulations.

The construction of the Suez Canal and the overcoming of the many formidable difficulties which it involved was due to the initiative, determination, and diplomatic skill of M. de Lesseps, whose father had been a French Political Agent in Egypt at the time of Bonaparte and had helped Mohammed Ali to obtain his position as Viceroy. Ferdinand spent much of his early youth as a friend of Said Pasha and other members of Mohammed Ali's household. He was brought up in the French Consulate in Cairo and became Vice-Consul in Alexandria. For many years the construction of the Canal had been in his mind, but it was not until Said Pasha became Viceroy that de Lesseps returned to Egypt from abroad and renewed the old friendship of his youth. It was by his horsemanship that he won the admiration of the new Viceroy, and this greatly hastened the approval of the draft Concession which he had prepared. Indeed, the Viceroy is said to have signed the document without reading it.

It was a proud day for France and for this great Frenchman when, on 17 November 1869, the French Imperial yacht, *L'Aigle*, with the Empress Eugénie on board, led a procession of sixty-eight ships from Port Said to Suez. This historic ceremony has been vividly described by Sir Ian Malcolm, a British Government Representative on the Board of the Suez Canal Company.¹

‘The little harbour of Port Said was alive with ships of many nations, bearing the most eminent representatives of art and science, of commerce and industry, Sovereigns, Princes, and Ambassadors, to enjoy the unbounded hospitality of the Khedive, and to see with their own eyes this great thing that had actually come

¹ *Quarterly Review*, January 1930.

to pass. Already, on November 13th, His Highness the Khedive had anchored his yacht the *Mahroussa* outside Port Said to receive his guests, whose arrivals from over many seas continued for three days and three nights : The Emperor of Austria, the Crown Prince of Prussia, members of other reigning families and finally the Empress Eugénie on board the *Aigle*. It was a gorgeous and a glittering scene at the doorway of the desert ; there were fifty men-of-war flying the flags of all nations of Europe, firing salutes, playing their bands, whilst the sandy littoral was covered with tented Arabs and Bedouin from far and near, who had come with their families on horseback and camel to join in the greatest festival that Egypt has seen since the days of the Ptolemies. On the foreground were erected three large pavilions or enclosed terraces ; in the centre one were massed the illustrious guests of the Khedive ; on the right hand was the Mohammedan hierarchy supported by its faithful, and on the left an altar for Christian worship and thanksgiving. When the rites of all the Churches had been duly celebrated and the Canal blessed, the Civil opening took place in official form. That evening, 16th November, there was a display of fireworks, and festivities were prolonged far into the night.

‘ On the following morning at 6 a.m. all the vessels that had the *entrée* to the Canal were marshalled and paraded. Two hours later the *Aigle*, bearing the Empress of the French and M. de Lesseps, headed the procession and passed in dignified array from the Mediterranean Sea into the waters of the Suez Canal . . . acclaimed by teeming multitudes crowding the arid banks of the burning desert, until they reached Ismailia, the little capital of the Canal zone on Lake Timsah . . . and the *Aigle* dropped her anchor.

‘ On the 19th the journey was renewed, and the *Aigle* with her escort steamed on to the Bitter Lakes, where they anchored for the night and continued on the following morning to Suez, having done the whole

journey in sixteen hours . . . without mishap of any kind.'

The lavish festivities held in Egypt on this occasion were extended far beyond the Canal zone. The road now running from Cairo to the Pyramids was built in the course of six weeks for the benefit of the Royal guests of the Viceroy; and Verdi's opera, *Aida*, was specially given on this occasion. The opera was presented in the Cairo Opera House with great magnificence, and it is said that the performers wore real jewels valued at several million pounds. Although Great Britain had provided an ample quota of obstruction during the carrying out of the project, she now realized her mistake and gave full honour to its originator. M. de Lesseps received from Queen Victoria the Grand Cross of the Star of India. The Lord Mayor of London, proposing his health at an official banquet in his honour, openly declared that 'our eminent engineers made a mistake—M. de Lesseps was right, and the Suez Canal is a living fact.' He was made a freeman of the City of London, and the Prince of Wales, on presenting him with a gold medal, said :

"Great Britain will never forget that it is to you alone that we owe the success of this great achievement. . . . I hope that since you have been in our midst our people have shown you how highly they appreciate the advantages that your splendid work has bestowed, and will continue to bestow, upon our country."

Meanwhile, Ismail Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal, had landed himself in a morass of debt owing to his unlimited capacity for gorgeous extravagance. The huge expenses incurred in connection with the Suez Canal ceremonies considerably added to his financial distress. Indeed, so serious did the situation become that Ismail was threatened with bankruptcy, and the Khedive began to look about for

means of selling his shares in the Canal Company. So it came about that in 1875, some years after the Canal had been opened to navigation, Ismail was found to be negotiating with a French company for the sale of his original shares—176,602 shares out of the 400,000 issued. By this time the obstructive policy of Palmerston and Gladstone had been succeeded by the realistic foresight of Disraeli, who saw in the embarrassment of the Khedive a great opportunity of acquiring for the British Treasury about 46¹ per cent of the total shares of the Suez Canal Company.

Dramatic were the circumstances under which Disraeli bought the Khedive's shares for the British Government.

‘ On the evening of the 14th November 1875, Mr. Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, found himself at dinner in London with Mr. Henry Oppenheim, from whom he learned that the Khedive was negotiating with a French company for the sale of his shares in the Suez Canal Company. The next morning Mr. Greenwood conveyed this information to Lord Derby, the Foreign Minister, who immediately transmitted it to Mr. Disraeli, whose imagination was fired by the possibilities that he foresaw. Telegrams immediately passed between London and Cairo; the Khedive was informed that Her Majesty's Government could not view with indifference the transfer to persons unknown of the said shares, and desired that the negotiations should be suspended and the purchase price disclosed to them. The sum of £4,000,000 was named; on the 23rd November the shares were offered to Mr. Disraeli; on the 24th November the money was guaranteed by Messrs. Rothschild; on the 25th November the contract was signed at Cairo; and on the 26th November the shares were deposited in the British Consulate.’²

¹ The Khedive's original 44 per cent holding and some other shares.

² Sir Ian Malcolm in the *National Review*, May 1921.

Thanks to the British Prime Minister's rapid negotiations over these shares, a very substantial and ever-increasing revenue was obtained for the British Treasury, as well as the appointment of three British Directors to serve on the Board as representatives of the British Government. These shares, purchased for £4,076,622, were valued at £45,395,998 on the 31 March 1938. But, although the British Government holds 46 per cent of the shares, they have only ten votes at a general meeting. The dividend received in 1937 was £1,975,658. The number of British Directors was later extended to ten by the appointment as additional directors of seven London merchants representing the ship-owners, although it is the shippers who really pay the Canal dues. This was the result of ten years' continual agitation against the height of the Canal dues, when the possibility of building a second canal to compete with the first was seriously considered. The total number of directors is thirty-two, and they are paid by a percentage of the Canal profits. When the additional directors were appointed in 1883 they were paid less than £1,000 a year; now each of the thirty-two directors receives from £3,000 to £4,000 a year.

The purchase of these shares by the British Government was decided upon through fear that they might come into French hands, as seemed more than likely at the time. Lord Derby, the Foreign Minister, objected to a monopoly in foreign hands of a concern in which Great Britain had the dominating interest, having made more use of the Canal than all other nations put together. He argued that the Company and the French shareholders possessed 110,000,000 francs of the 200,000,000 francs comprised in the capital of the Company's shares. It was on this account that the British Government purchased the shares in question, and not to obtain any monopoly for itself. At this time, it should be remembered, the future of the Canal was particularly uncertain; the British occupation of Egypt had not begun; and the Canal had not yet been internationalized by treaty.

The status of the Suez Canal from the point of view of international law is one of those questions that leads to a complicated and rather dull discussion of abstruse legal points. Here it is only necessary to give a general idea of the conditions under which the Canal can be used in peace and in war. Although a great deal has been said about the 'neutrality' of this waterway, this term is apt to be misunderstood. The words 'freedom' or 'free navigation' are more appropriate.¹ The Suez Canal has been 'universalized.' In other words, it has been made free to the ships of all nations, in peace and in war, on payment of the prescribed dues. This was brought about by a Convention signed at Constantinople in 1888. Egypt is bound by the undertaking, as also are the European Powers. It was agreed that the Suez Canal should 'always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war without distinction of flag.' It was definitely laid down that the Canal should never be subjected to the process of blockade. Provision was also made to safeguard the Fresh-Water Canal,² as being essential for the water supply in the desert surroundings of the Suez Canal itself. Another important provision of this Convention was based on the free passage, in time of war, even to the ships of war of belligerents. It laid down that 'no right of war, no act of hostility, nor any act having for its object to obstruct the free navigation of the Canal, shall be committed in the Canal and its ports of access, as well as within a radius of three marine miles from these ports, even though the Ottoman Empire should be one of the belligerent Powers.' There are definite restrictions with regard to revictualling and the taking-in of stores by warships of belligerents in the Canal and its ports of access; and the same applies to the embarking and disembarking of troops, munitions, or war material. The Powers also agreed not to try to obtain territorial or commercial

¹ Vide *Modern Egypt* (Gromer), Volume 2, p. 384.

² This Canal connects with the Nile at Cairo.

advantages or privileges in any international arrangements which might be concluded. Moreover, the obligations undertaken by the Powers at this time were not to be limited to the period of the Concession granted to the Suez Canal Company.

The situation of the Suez Canal in time of war is of special interest, and has given rise to many thorny problems. As Great Britain is more interested than any other Power in keeping the Canal open, the ingenuity and patience of successive British Governments have on occasions been taxed to their full capacity. When, in 1904, the Russian Baltic Fleet under Admiral Rojdestvensky passed through the Suez Canal on its way to the bottom of the sea in Far-Eastern waters, one of the Russian ships broke the regulations about coaling by belligerent warships in the Canal zone; and in this case the passive attitude of the British Government strengthened their position as guardians of the Canal's free passage. Soon after the beginning of the Great War a number of enemy merchant ships sought refuge at Port Said and Suez in order to avoid capture. In most cases they were allowed to do so, although circumstances arose in which it was considered necessary to give German vessels permission to put to sea without a safe-conduct. It was under these terms that the *Gutenfels*, *Barenfels*, and *Derflinger*, having refused this offer, were conducted outside territorial waters to be captured by a British warship.

The order later issued by the British General Officer commanding the Forces protecting the Canal, that no enemy vessel was to enter, was a precaution against the possibility that the Germans intended to sink ships in order to block the free waterway. This safeguard was ensured by the British Navy's command of the High Seas outside the three-mile limit at both ends. The British intention here was not to discriminate against enemy ships, but to safeguard the free passage of the Canal being blocked by enemy action.

In cases where the masters of enemy ships were dis-

covered using their wireless for illegitimate purposes, the apparatus was merely dismantled by the Company's officials. Naturally there were many humorous incidents, which at times made the regulations appear somewhat ridiculous. Sir John Maxwell used to tell the story of how a German sailor swam round a British warship, waving a German flag and hurling abuse at the ship's company. Nothing was done to interfere with this enterprising Teuton's attempt to engage the British Navy by word of mouth, as any effort to do so might have led to hostilities on a small scale within the Canal zone. It may be mentioned that the British ships of war at Port Said and Suez were there with the specific object of keeping the Canal open for the free passage of all ships, and not to prevent the right of passage in any way. At this time the position of the Suez Canal Company was, in many respects, delicate. Many of the Suez Canal pilots were Austrians, and were still serving in 1916. Although these men were faithful servants of the Company, in which nationality was intended to play no part, the men themselves were placed in a difficult position. But the Company regarded their services to be essential, and the guarantee given as to their loyalty was fully justified.

During the Italo-Ethiopian War, Italian warships and a large number of troopships and transports passed through the Suez Canal on their way to and from the ports of Massawa and Mogadishu. At the time when sanctions were imposed by the League Powers, it was urged in certain quarters that the League Council had powers to bring about the closing of the Suez Canal to the ships of a nation which they had officially found guilty of 'aggression.' On closer investigation, however, it was found that action of this kind would involve the breach of a treaty, and would even be an act of war in which Egypt would be involved. The situation was quite different from that in which the Canal was closed to ships of the Central Powers during the Great War. While in the latter case there was fear of the Canal being blocked to general shipping by enemy action, it was in

the vital interest of the Italians, with whom we were at peace, that the Canal should remain open as their only line of communications between their home bases in Europe and their theatre of war in Africa. The Suez Canal cannot be closed to the ships of any nation, unless its free passage is threatened by the passing ships of the belligerent Powers. All that can be done to prevent the ships of any nation from passing through the Canal is to hold them up by naval action outside the three-mile limit either in the Mediterranean or Red Sea, but this presumably would be regarded as an act of war. In 1936 the net tonnage for Italian warships and transports alone amounted to 2,071,043 tons out of a total in this category of 2,509,578 tons.

The length of the Canal is about 106 miles, including the deepened approach channels for large vessels, and the average time of transit for all ships is about 13½ hours. The depth is between 36 and 40 feet. At the end of the breakwater at Port Said is a large statue of de Lesseps, holding out his right hand in a southerly direction as if to convey the message 'Pass and pay.' From here the Canal is perfectly straight most of the way to Ismailia, its half-way point on Lake Timsah. It then passes through the Bitter Lakes before reaching the short, straight stretch leading to the Gulf of Suez. At the Port Tewfik end is the crouching lion of the Australian War Memorial.

The Suez Canal Company, although essentially French in its constitution, is registered under Egyptian law as an Egyptian company. The President is always a Frenchman, and the same applies to nineteen of its Directors and the greater part of its secretariat and personnel, whether in France or Egypt. There are ten British and one Dutch Directors, and before the Great War there was a representative of Germany. There has been no German representation on the Board since 1914. Two Egyptians have been elected to the Board and more will be appointed as vacancies arise until they compose one-third of the Directors. Also arrangements have recently been made for Egyptians to be employed to a much greater extent on

the staff of the Company.¹ All Directors are appointed by the General Meeting of Shareholders on the nomination of the Board. When a vacancy occurs among the unofficial British Directors, it is customary for the name of a successor to be put forward by the remaining unofficial Directors. Each Director holds 100 shares, and the British Government holds 353,504 shares out of a total of 800,000 shares ; but no shareholder is entitled to more than 10 votes. As Italy now stands second in the Canal returns, it may be taken for granted that she will soon demand representation on the Board, to which she is entitled according to the terms of the Concession as one of the ' nations principally interested.'² The same applied to Germany, who, before the war, came third in the tonnage returns, and was more entitled to be represented than Holland, who took fourth place. Now, the removal of German shipping from the world's trade routes has solved this aspect of the matter for the present.

The Board meets at the Company's offices in the Rue d'Astorg in Paris on the first Monday of every month. It then receives a report from the Chairman of the Committee of Management, who is also President of the Company. This Committee meets weekly, and directs the whole policy of the Company, subject to the approval of the Board, and includes one of the three British Government's representatives. There is a financial sub-committee ; engineering questions are dealt with by experts, and finally submitted to an International Committee of Technical Engineers which meets annually in Paris. There are also banking, legal, and other departments, and the whole business activities of the Company are made as self-contained as possible. The senior official in Egypt is the Superior Agent with headquarters in

¹ An Agreement in 1937 between the Company and Egypt provided for two Egyptian directors, the annual payment of £E.300,000 by the Company to the Egyptian Government, the reconstruction of the Port Said-Suez road (at a cost not to exceed £E.300,000), and an increase to 33 per cent of the Egyptian quota of employees.

² The French interpret this in the financial sense, and not in terms of the amount of dues paid on tonnage.

Cairo. As the Company's diplomatic representative, this official controls all relations with the Egyptian Government. He also supervises and co-ordinates the work of the two great departments of Traffic and Works. He acts as landlord for the Company ; supervises the architect's plans ; controls the medical staff and all legal business, and is responsible for the fresh-water supply. Indeed, he is responsible to the Paris Board for practically everything that happens or is done in the Canal zone.

The Traffic and Works Department, with their own secretariat and financial sections have their headquarters at Ismailia, situated on Lake Timsah, about half-way between Port Said and Suez. The principal officers of the Traffic Department come from the French Navy, and are responsible for controlling the traffic of ships through the Canal. They control the speed of ships, allot berths to them, and provide them with pilots. The Works Department carries out all engineering work and dredging as well as every form of building and repairs. They also control workshop, ferries, tugs, etc., in the Canal and at the ports. The staff of this department is mainly drawn from first-class graduates of the *École Polytechnique* and the *École Centrale* in Paris. Both these departments have their corresponding subsections at Port Tewfik and Port Said ; and there is a through service of telegraph and telephone. With the exception of the Bitter Lakes, there is a permanent station with a staff for this purpose every six miles ; and by this means there is constant communication between the officers on duty on the whole length of the Canal at all hours of the day and night. It is impossible for a ship to move, stop, or cross another ship, without the fact being immediately reported up and down the line ; and even the most trivial accident to the banks or waterway is known to the Canal authorities a few seconds after it has happened.

The work that is continually going on is of the greatest possible variety. It includes the lengthening of breakwaters ; widening, strengthening, and straightening of

the Canal banks, and the building of better houses for all grades of the Company's staff at different centres. Among the more recent improvements has been the building of Port Fuad, an entirely new city opposite Port Said. The transfer to this new centre of activity of all the Company's engineering and repair shops has greatly relieved the previous congestion of Port Said. Similar improvements on a smaller scale are being carried out at Port Tewfik and Ismailia. As Port Fuad is housing an increasing number of Canal employees, it has been built in the form of a garden city with avenues and boulevards, schools and shops, churches, mosques, and hospitals. Here there are houses and apartments to meet the needs of all classes of an international community. Between Port Said and Suez there are about 12,000 people, including wives and children, dependent upon the Suez Canal Company for their livelihood. There are superintendents, doctors, architects, schoolmasters, priests, nuns, clerks, pilots, artisans, and native labourers. The Company takes the greatest interest in the welfare of all its servants, and it is safe to say that no body of employees in Egypt lives in such comfort or enjoys such privileges as those of the Suez Canal Company.

In spite of its universal nature the Company is a private French concern whose business is to make profits. There are vast reserve funds and large salaries are paid together with liberal pensions. The Company has shown large profits on the scale of dues levied. In 1913 these profits were 33 per cent ; in 1930 they had risen to 44 per cent ; while in 1932 they fell to 31 per cent. The following figures show the receipts, payments, and division of surplus profits for the years 1935-37.

As 30 per cent of the receipts cover the Company's expenses, it is obvious that the dues are excessive. The dues from which the profits are derived were about 5s. 4d. per Suez Canal ton in 1913. On 15 December 1938 they were reduced from 6s. to 5s. 9d., which is 3d. higher than they were in 1929. At the 6s. rate the transit dues on a cargo of 7,000 tons of British coal shipped in a

SUEZ CANAL RECEIPTS 1935-37

1937	1936	1935	Year		
1312·97	899·93	857·22	In million francs	Ships	Transit and Navigation
33·45	40·85	29·68		Passengers	
8·86	6·01	5·39		Other Dues	
1355·28	946·29	892·29		Total	
69·71	24·59	22·58		Investments	Estates and Permanent Revenues
8·14	5·28	4·73		Estates and Permanent Revenues	
16·35	9·55	8·14		Other Receipts	
4·40	2·25	4·50		Brought Forward	
1453·88	998·46	932·23		Total	

SUEZ CANAL PAYMENTS 1935-37

1937	1936	1935	Year		
50·29	35·59	32·81	In million francs	Administration	Transit
100·323	64·45	59·50		Transit	
110·60	75·91	66·47		Maintenance	Estates, Water, etc.
41·50	27·87	26·08		Estates, Water, etc.	
160·75	72·59	72·62		Bonds	Interest and Drawings
87·30	61·86	49·64		Shares	
45	20	35		Reserves. Statutory Special Depreciation, etc.	Carried Forward
4·88	4·40	2·25		Carried Forward	
600·64	362·673	44·37		Total	Total

SUEZ CANAL—DIVISION OF SURPLUS PROFITS 1935-37

1937	1936	1935	Year	
852.23	625.79	552.88	In million francs	Total
605.08	444.31	392.54		Shareholders 71%
127.83	93.86	82.93		Egyptian Government 15%
85.22	62.57	55.29		Founders' Shares 10%
17.04	12.51	11.06		Directors 2%
17.04	12.51	11.05		Staff 2%

collier of 2,900 net tons (3,700 Suez Canal tons) were about £1,000, or nearly 3s. per ton. There is a peculiar distinction between the dues on ships 'in ballast' and those which are 'loaded,' although the cost to the Company of getting them through the Canal is almost the same. The difference in dues is 50 per cent, and may amount to £2,000 or even more. As in practice these ballast rates are only of value to tankers, chiefly British, they are the source of a strong and legitimate grievance. In these circumstances shipowners with light tonnages lose money, and often refuse to take small consignments by this route. Also, the charge of 6s. or more for every passenger has no relation to the cost of transit, and is most severe on troopships, most of which are now British or Italian. Another form of traffic hard hit by the high dues is the bulky cargo of low value. For example, certain fibres from East Africa can at present be sent round the Cape just as cheaply as through the Canal, especially when the ship is not loaded to full capacity. It is estimated that the cost of taking a ship through the Suez Canal is now equal to 10 days' extra steaming at sea.

The Suez Canal dues are, on the average, ship for ship, from 10 to 20 per cent higher than those of the Panama Canal, which cost three times as much to build, costs much more to maintain, and yet more than pays its way. The effect of this difference in dues has been to divert a considerable amount of shipping to the Panama Canal route. Sir Arnold Wilson¹ describes how Wellington, New Zealand, is 1,071 miles and Yokohama 1,081 miles nearer London via Panama than via Suez; Sidney is only 28 miles nearer via Suez. Manilla is 180 miles, Fremantle 593 miles, and Hong Kong 219 miles nearer New York via Suez than via Panama. In all such cases the difference in the Canal dues is an important factor to be taken into consideration in choosing the route to be followed, and the decisions are becoming more and more in favour of Panama. The lower the dues at Panama, the better it is for American shipping in the Asiatic trade; while the higher the dues at Suez, the better it is for Japanese trade in the East.

Another possible diversion of trade owing to the high dues at Suez is due to the great increase of Italian shipping now passing through the Canal. When it is realized that in 1937 Italy paid near two million pounds in Suez Canal dues for her comparatively short-distance traffic with her East African possessions, and this in foreign currency, it will be seen why she is so anxious to have the dues reduced or to obtain some share in the profits. Failing this, she may approach the Egyptian Government with a view to opening up an overland route through Egypt by which the Suez Canal would be outflanked. As the route from Egypt to Italian East Africa via the Nile Valley would at present involve higher expenditure than that via the Suez Canal, and is not yet sufficiently opened up in certain parts to deal with the traffic, some other expedient would be necessary. In this case the port of Alexandria would have to be used, with rail or road communication to some point on the Red Sea coast, south of Suez. Whether such a project would pay the

¹ *The Suez Canal*. London, 1933.

Italians or the Egyptian Government, who receive 15 per cent of the Canal profits, or whether such a proposal would induce the Canal Company to reduce the dues, I am not in a position to say. Hitherto, protests from many quarters have had little effect, but the time is approaching when the maritime Powers of the world will demand that this international waterway will give passage at the lowest possible rates consistent with sound finance. The legal status and system of administration of the Canal seem scarcely to meet the needs of the world to-day, which is inclined to resent private profit at the expense of its trade.

As the Concession expires in 1968, when the Canal reverts to the Egyptian Government, the time is rapidly approaching when a decision has to be taken on what terms the Concession is to be renewed, or whether some new basis is to be found for its status and administration. Whatever action is taken in this matter, something will have to be done meanwhile to limit the profits, and to introduce a more economical system of working. There is an urgent need for a substantial reduction of dues in the interests of all the maritime Powers, as also of those who stand to lose by the diversion of shipping to other routes.

Until the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in 1926 the protection of the Suez Canal was entirely in the hands of the British Government, which had greater interest than any other government in keeping it open under all conditions. Yet Ismailia was the only point actually in the Canal zone that was garrisoned, the British troops being distributed throughout Egypt. Now, under peace conditions, the British forces in Egypt are to be confined to the Canal zone as soon as barrack accommodation is ready for them, and will remain there until the Egyptian Army is in a position to take their place. The Anglo-Italian Agreement of 1938 merely reaffirms the intention of both countries to abide by the Constantinople Convention of 1888, guaranteeing at all times and for all Powers the free use of the Suez Canal. While

An Agreement on these lines is a simple matter, the same cannot be said of a settlement over the Canal dues satisfactory to Italy, the other governments concerned, and shippers all over the world who have to pay the costs.

CHAPTER V

THE WATERS OF THE NILE

AS the waters of the Nile play so great a part, directly or indirectly, in many of the more important questions affecting North-East African development, it is essential at this point in my narrative to explain in simple terms the significance of the Nile system, the way it works, and some of the difficulties with which engineers have to contend. Without some knowledge of these facts it is impossible to have a clear idea as to the possibilities of various forms of development with which the Nile waters are connected. In the following account I have therefore made use of expert information, which I have reduced to language and terms understandable to the ordinary non-technical reader.

Ever since the very earliest times, the Nile has had a great influence on human civilization. The historic remains of ancient Egypt distributed along its banks reflect how this great waterway has affected religion, learning, and art throughout the ages. They show how the river gave birth to early forms of navigation, ancient devices for cultivating the land by irrigation, and the influence which the river had on the early knowledge of astronomy. The early Egyptian peasants, in their desire to foretell the arrival of the flood, came to associate this important event with the first appearance of Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens. The fact that the appearance of Sirius immediately preceded the Nile flood led to a serious study of astronomical phenomena on the part of the Egyptians. In 4241 B.C., the earliest fixed date in the history of the world, they drew up a calendar based on

the solar year, dating it from the first rising of Sirius. While other early civilizations based their dates on moons, the Egyptians thought out the idea of an artificial month, dividing the year into twelve months of thirty days each, with five holidays. This remained in force until Roman times, when Julius Cæsar changed the length of the months and fixed the calendar as we have it to-day. The supreme interest of the Nile, however, lies in the fact that it not only has a most absorbing past, but a growing scientific importance at the present time and considerable possibilities for the future. If the questions affecting the control of its water supply are complicated and far-reaching, the possibilities in this direction are great owing to the variety of country and climatic conditions through which the river flows.

The Nile is not only one of the most remarkable, but is the second longest river in the world. From its farthest source, near Lake Tanganyika, to the Mediterranean, this great river travels through a distance of over four thousand miles. For actual volume of water there are many rivers which surpass it; but there is no other in the world providing such a mass of scientific interest and few which have received such detailed study throughout the centuries. The Nile drains nearly the whole of North-East Africa, about half of which actually supplies water to the river. Its basin has three main divisions: (1) The Equatorial Basin, supplying what is known as the Albert Nile and the Bahr-el-Ghazal; (2) The Ethiopian Basin, with its main drainage channels, the Sobat, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara; and (3) The Desert Basin, in which the Nile has no tributary whatever and flows as a solitary stream to the sea over a distance of 1,725 miles. In this last reach the Nile flows through one of the greatest deserts of the world, and on its waters depends every form of animal and vegetable life existing on or near its banks. These three regions of the Nile Valley have entirely different climatic conditions. The plateau of the great lakes has two seasons a year of equatorial rains; the highlands of Ethiopia are influenced

by the Africo-Asiatic monsoon ; while the desert reaches come within the zone of dry and stable trade winds. It is to the desert regions that the great question of irrigation has so far been confined. The question facing engineers has been how to make use of the excessive rainfall in the equatorial and mountain regions for the benefit of the more northerly desert reaches, where there is scarcely any rainfall at all.

Rising among the great lakes of Central Africa, the Nile flows from one lake into another and through tropical vegetation into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. In the southern Sudan, it flows through a great area of swamps before reaching Lake No, where it is joined by the Bahr-el-Ghazal. Turning eastward at this point, it continues until joined by the Sobat before changing its course to a more northerly direction. As the White Nile, the river continues through flat country to Khartoum, where it is joined by the Blue Nile. At Atbara, the river receives its last tributary, and continues north to Abu Hamed, where it takes a sharp turn to the south-west before looping round to the north again and crossing the Egyptian frontier at Wadi Halfa. From here the Nile continues its course through the Nubian Desert until it reaches Cairo and splits into two branches, one reaching the sea at Rosetta and the other at Damietta. The countries surrounding these two branches form the fertile lands of the Delta. Throughout its course, the Nile flows through many cataracts and passes through many dams and barrages, which will be described in detail later on.

Owing to the great variety of climate, the Nile Valley has a varied assortment of vegetation and animal life. In the mountainous regions, the highest peaks of which are always snow-capped, Alpina flora are quite common. In parts of the Lake Plateau, there is dense tropical forest. There is the tall elephant grass common throughout Uganda ; the thin savannah forest of the southern half of the Nile Basin ; the dense vegetation of the tropical swamps ; the thorny scrub of the central Sudan ; and

the dried-up and skimpy vegetation of the desert regions in the north. But to these must be added the rich crops grown by means of irrigation along that fertile part of Egypt which is confined to the Nile Valley. The animals of the southern half of the Nile Valley include elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, water-buck, roan antelope, cob of various kinds, hartebeest, hippopotamus, reed buck, gazelle, wild pig, and a large assortment of monkeys. There are also many kinds of water-fowl, birds of prey, and game birds, the commonest of which are guinea fowl and partridge. While the rivers and lakes abound with crocodiles, there are also plenty of snakes and various kinds of lizards and other reptiles. But the most troublesome form of life in these parts is to be found in the various forms of disease-carrying insects. Mosquitoes thrive in the Upper Nile basin, while in certain districts there are also tsetse and other biting flies. These pests cause disease among both men and animals, so much so in the latter case that in many districts cattle cannot be kept and porters have to be used for transport purposes. With the building of roads, however, mechanical transport is helping to solve this difficulty.

I now propose to describe the Nile system in greater detail, so as to show some of the chief considerations which have to be taken into account in all questions concerning the control and use of its waters. The generally accepted source of the White Nile is what is known as the River Kagira, which rises near Lake Tanganyika, and is the chief supplier of water to Lake Victoria. This lake, situated on the Equator, at about 3,720 feet above sea-level, is shallow in depth and forms the first (natural) reservoir. The Nile, which changes its name several times and is here known as the Victoria Nile, leaves Lake Victoria at the Ripon Falls and flows through a narrow gorge to the swamps of Lake Kioga. Then, narrowing again in a series of rapids, it continues a turbulent course until reaching the northern end of Lake Albert. Owing to the large number of shallow lakes through which the river flows at this stage, important

quantities of water are lost by evaporation, and no means has yet been found of counteracting this difficulty. The river leaves Lake Albert at its northern end, and between this point and Nimule, its slope is gradual as it passes through a succession of swampy areas with few tributaries of any importance. Nimule is the first post in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and now provides a river alighting area for the Imperial Airways service of flying-boats. Four miles north of Nimule the river passes over the Fola Rapids, and has a rough passage through rocks and rapids to Lado, where it enters the Sudan plain and completely changes its character. In this stretch the Nile is joined by many streams, including the Assua, which supply a great deal of water during the rainy season, but are mostly dried up during four months of the year. River communication with Khartoum begins at Juba, from which point the river flows north into the swamp known as the 'Sudd' region, covering an area of many thousand square miles.

The word 'Sudd' ('Block'), popularly applied to the Nilotic swamps, really belongs to the great masses of vegetation which break from them during the stormy season, under the combined influence of gale and flood, and drift into the lagoons and ultimately the river channels. The 'Sudd' consists chiefly of papyrus and reeds, with long floating roots all tangled together. This forms large floating islands, which ground when they reach a shallow and quickly take root in the muddy bottom. As each fresh mass arrives, it is sucked underneath the first until the whole becomes wedged into a solid block, often having an under-water thickness of 15 or 20 feet. These blocks, which may exceed a mile in length, dam the main channel, cause the flooding of surrounding marshes, and prevent navigation. They constitute a great danger to shipping, as a steamer caught amongst them is liable to be crushed, and is certain to be imprisoned for an indefinite period. Of recent years however, supervision during the stormy season has kept the river open to traffic. The appearance of the river

throughout the 'Sudd' region is monotonous and depressing. On all sides stretch masses of the reed known as *um suf*, ambach, bus, and papyrus. These grasses rise to a height of 15 to 20 feet above the water, and often give the impression of the river being enclosed by a thick hedge, with perhaps a few trees in the far distance drawing attention to higher and drier ground. The result of all this confusion is that the river is intersected by waterways and lagoons, so that north of Mongalla the stream is never confined to a single channel; and this huge area of marsh, swamp, and open river is responsible for very heavy losses of water. The moisture in the atmosphere is excessive, while mosquitoes and other insects swarm in multitudes. Yet, like most of the more forbidding places of the world, the 'Sudd' has its redeeming features. Water-lilies, white, blue, and crimson, are often found on the surface of the stream, while the queer-looking whale-headed stork wanders among the reeds. At night this scene of river confusion is lit up by myriads of fire-flies.

At a point about Lat. $7^{\circ} 12'$ N. the Bahr-el-Zeraf, rising in the swamps to the east of the Bahr-el-Jebel, which the Nile is now called, becomes a definitely separate stream running parallel to the latter, to which it is joined near this point by two artificial channels. Branching off again from the main river, the Bahr-el-Zeraf flows through little-known and inaccessible swamps for over two hundred miles before rejoining the Bahr-el-Jebel, fifty miles south of its junction with the Bahr-el-Ghazal at Lake No. Hence, among the confusion of 'Sudd,' there is also a confusion of waters formed by the Bahr-el-Jebel, the Bahr-el-Zeraf, and the Bahr-el-Ghazal, together with the lower reaches of their respective tributaries. To this must be added a considerable confusion of names. While the river is known as the Victoria Nile in its upper reaches, and becomes the Albert Nile from Lake Albert to the Sudan frontier at Nimule, it then becomes known as the Bahr-el-Jebel-until it reaches Lake No and is joined by the Bahr-el,

Ghazal. From this point onwards the river is known as the Bahr-el-Abiad or White Nile, and continues to be so called until joined by the Blue Nile to form the main stream from Khartoum northwards. The Bahr-el-Ghazal gets its water from the northern slopes of the Nile-Congo watershed. From this many streams flow into the Sudan plain, where they form swamps in which the greater proportion of the water is evaporated, so that only a very small part flows out through the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

From Lake No the White Nile flows east for 96 miles in the form of a sluggish stream, with many islands and backwaters, until it is joined by the Sobat. The Sobat River, or Bahr-el-Asfar, is formed by the confluence of the Baro and its tributaries, draining the southern part of the Ethiopian plateau, with the Pibor and its tributaries, draining the plains and swamps east of the Bahr-el-Jebel. These two rivers unite on the Sudan-Ethiopian frontier, whence the Sobat flows north-west through alluvial plains to its junction with the White Nile, 16 miles south of Malakal. The Sobat serves as the main waterway for Ethiopian trade via Gambela, situated 355 miles from the junction of the Sobat and White Nile. Malakal is becoming a place of increasing importance; for, besides being the capital of the Upper Nile Province of the Sudan, and a centre of the Egyptian Irrigation Department, it is now a regular stopping place for Imperial Airways.

From the mouth of the Sobat to Omdurman, 516 miles, the White Nile receives no more regular supplies of water from tributaries. The only obstacles to navigation in this long reach are the rocky reefs at Jebelein and the Abu Zeid ford, where the water sometimes falls as low as two feet, but navigable channels are in both cases now marked by buoys. In this reach, to the junction with the Blue Nile, the river flows through a great alluvial plain, stretching from the highlands of Ethiopia in the east to the hilly districts of Kordofan in the west, and covered with high grass and scattered bush. Although there are still swamps on either bank, the Nile flows again in a definite

channel with well-defined banks. Forty-five miles north of Malakal is Kodok, formerly known as Fashoda, where, in 1898, Colonel Marchand hoisted the French flag and produced an incident nearly leading to war between Great Britain and France. Downstream from here are Galhak and Er Renk, two small river ports, which will greatly benefit from the opening up of the Sudan transit route via Kurmuk for Italian traffic. Farther north still, about 324 miles from the mouth of the Sobat, is Kosti,¹ where the Khartoum-Sennar-El-Obeid railway crosses the river by a steel girder bridge. After passing Ed Dueim, the old river port of Kordofan, and flowing through the new dam at Jebel Aulia, the White Nile approaches Khartoum with a width of over a mile and an average depth of 6½ feet. Opposite Omdurman is the meeting-place of the White and Blue Niles. The different colours of the two rivers is most noticeable, when looking down at them from the Omdurman Bridge. While the water of the White Nile is of a greenish grey colour, that of the Blue Nile is clear and blue, except when it becomes reddish brown from the silt which it carries in flood time.

Before describing the course of what is known as the 'main stream' north of Khartoum, it is necessary to give an account of the Blue Nile system and the Atbarà, which joins the main stream 201 miles north of Khartoum and is the last tributary received by it before reaching the sea. The Blue Nile, or Bahr-el-Azrak, has its source in the Little Abbai River, which rises at the sacred spring of Sakala at the foot of the Gish Mountain in Ethiopia. This spring was discovered in 1618 by Pedro Paez, a Portuguese explorer, and has long been regarded with veneration. Legend relates that Zarabruk, a native of Densa, prayed to God for twelve years, which resulted in the finding of the spring. King Azaracho cast him into prison and he remained in a dungeon for a year. The jailer, on finding a light radiating from Zarabruk, reported his sanctity to the king. Zarabruk then performed another miracle by keeping his food and handing

¹ Capital of the Kordofan Province,

it back to the king on his release. The bread was found hot and fresh as if it had just been baked. He then returned to the spring. The book he had left was returned by the waters, and people resorting to the spring have been cured ever since. In times of drought a bull is sacrificed at the spring, and it is said that rain comes as soon as this is done. The church of SS. Michael and Zarabruk now stands on a ridge, about 400 yards north-east of the spring. The spring is resorted to by many Ethiopians, including chiefs of importance, and, apart from offerings given to the church, much money has thereby come into the hands of the local chiefs and priests.

The Little Abbai flows for about 70 miles before reaching Lake Tana at a point about 40 miles north-east of Bahrdar Giorgis. As the Abbai, or Blue Nile, the river leaves the lake at its southern extremity, flowing first through various lagoons and then over a series of cataracts. The scenery of Lake Tana is beautiful and the climate is good for most of the year. The colour of the lake and river is a greenish blue; and this, together with the semi-tropical jungle and scrub of the cataracts, produces a picture fascinating for its true African character and vivid colouring. Bright-coloured flowers and birds of gay plumage add to the attraction of the scene. From here the river flows through a valley of increasing depth until finally its bed becomes a deep, narrow gorge with steep, rocky sides. But the course of the Blue Nile to the Sudan is by no means direct, for the river makes a great *détour* round practically the whole of the Gojjam, receiving many tributaries on its way. On the right bank it receives the Dura, and on the left bank the Debusi, which are two of the principal suppliers of water in this reach. The Blue Nile reaches the Sudan at Famaka, and continues from there to Roseires, where river navigation begins during the flood season. In its course of 560 miles, the river has fallen nearly 4,000 feet.

In its course to Suki, a station on the railway connecting Khartoum with Port Sudan, the river flows over the Sudan plains and passes near the important market town

of Singa. At Sennar is the Makwar Dam, the absence of a lock confining navigation to the reaches south of Suki. Fifty-five miles below Sennar, on the right bank, is the junction of the Dinder, a large tributary rising in the Ethiopian hills, which is navigable by steamers during flood-time for about 130 miles and by small boats for a much greater distance. Some 37 miles lower is Wad Medani,¹ and on the right bank, 5 miles farther downstream, is the junction of the Rahad, the second great tributary of the Blue Nile in the Sudan. The Rahad rises in the Ethiopian highlands west of Lake Tana, has a total length of about 400 miles, and is navigable by small steamers during flood-time over practically the whole distance. These rivers dry up completely during the dry season. On entering Khartoum the river flows under the Blue Nile railway bridge, past the Governor General's Palace, and joins the White Nile at the Omdurman Bridge.

While in winter the river is a mere trickle of water, during the summer and autumn it becomes a swift torrent, bringing down a huge volume of water and silt from the Ethiopian plateau. Its maximum discharge at this time is 10,000 to 12,000 cubic metres per second, and it contributes a quantity of water and fertilizing matter greatly exceeding that of all the other branches and tributaries of the Nile system. The average difference between the flood and low-water levels is about 20 feet. The Blue Nile begins to rise about the end of April and becomes navigable about 20 June, by which time its waters have become reddish brown in colour owing to the large quantities of alluvium held in suspension.

The Atbara, which joins the main stream at the town of Atbara, rises in Ethiopia and flows for about 100 miles before reaching the Nile. In summer this river merely consists of a string of pools with no discharge of water, but from June to October its flood is caused by the same rains as supply the Blue Nile flood, and is very great.

¹ Capital of the Blue Nile Province.



Photo Suez Canal Company

THE SUEZ CANAL, PORT SAID



Photo Suez Canal Company

THE SUEZ CANAL, PORT TEWFIK



Photo Suez Canal Company

THE SUEZ CANAL, SIGNAL STATION



SOURCE OF THE BLUE NILE

The Atbara flood sometimes reaches as much as 6,000 cubic metres per second. Although usually the climax of the Atbara occurs a little before that of the Blue Nile, they sometimes occur at the same time and thereby cause floods dangerous to Egypt. It is to the Blue Nile, and in a lesser degree to the Atbara, that Egypt owes her prosperity. Not only does the Blue Nile supply the greater proportion of the flood water that reaches Egypt, but also it provides the rich silt which gives fertility to the land.

Beyond the junction with the Atbara, the Nile passes Berber and flows over the Bagara Rapid. Farther north, at Abu Hamed, the river changes its course to a south-westerly direction, which continues as far as Korti. It then turns north again to Dongola, and later north-east to the Egyptian frontier at Wadi Halfa. While the distance from Abu Hamed to Wadi Halfa by river is 595 miles, the direct rail or caravan route across the desert is only 232 miles. Between Wadi Halfa and Assuan, the effects of the Nile reservoir created by the Assuan Dam are clearly visible; but the large-scale inundations, submerging a multitude of palm trees, and the famous Temple of Philæ, are chiefly due to the second heightening of this great irrigation work. After passing Assuan, the river enters its most important zone from the point of view of archæology, with the tombs and temples of Luxor and countless other monuments of special interest to Egyptologists. North of Luxor are the barrages of Esna, Nag Hamadi, and Assiut, after which the river flows north to Cairo. At the Delta Barrage, just north of Cairo, the Nile divides into the Rosetta and Damietta branches, on the latter of which it flows through the Zifta Barrage before reaching the sea. From a short distance north of Atbara to within a few miles of Cairo, the country is almost rainless, cultivation being confined to a narrow strip of land on either bank of the river. Otherwise the country is mere desert, consisting of sand, rocks, and scrub. North of Cairo the valley opens out to form the rich green delta of Egypt. From Khartoum

to the sea by river is nearly 2,000 miles, which is half the entire length of the Nile.

Between Khartoum and Assuan, a distance of 1,124 miles, there are 351 miles of broken water and rapids divided into six main cataracts. The highest, which is about 52 miles below Khartoum, is known as the Sixth or Shabluka Cataract. It has a fall of about 20 feet, most of which occurs in a little over one mile. About 194 miles farther north the Fifth Cataract begins, a little below El Abadia and about 30 miles below Berber; it is over 100 miles in length and in this distance the fall is 205 feet. About 60 miles downstream is the Fourth Cataract, which is 68 miles in length and has a fall of 160 feet. Between the Fourth Cataract and Kerma, at the beginning of the Third, is a stretch of 200 miles of navigable stream, which is the main trade route of the Dongola province. The Third Cataract, which has two rapids, is over 45 miles in length, with a fall of 36 feet; and about 70 miles farther north is the Second Cataract, 125 miles long, with four rapids, passing through the inhospitable region known as the Batn el-Haggar (Belly of Rocks), where the Nile falls 213 feet. Halfa is 6 miles below the foot of the Second Cataract. The First Cataract (214 miles from the Second) is beyond the Sudan frontier, between Assuan and Shellal, and has a fall of 16 feet in 3 miles. The river passes through the great dam at Assuan; and by means of a fine masonry canal with several locks, navigation is made possible at all seasons of the year from Halfa to Cairo, and in some seasons to the mouth of the Nile at Damietta, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles.

During the flood season the cataracts are navigable by those who know their peculiarities and dangers, but they are not much used except for local communications, the railway being preferred for traffic between Halfa and Khartoum. Hence the main stream and White Nile are navigable from a point just south of Juba to Khartoum, and from Wadi Halfa to the sea, the Khartoum-Wadi Halfa reach (full of cataracts) being covered by the

Sudan railways leaving the Nile and running straight through the desert. For purposes of navigation, there are locks at the Jebel Aulia and Assuan Dams, at the latter of which there is also the navigation canal. There are also locks at the Esna, Nag Hamadi, Assiut, and Delta Barrages. As the weir below the Zifta Barrage has no lock, river traffic can only pass when the subsidiary weir is submerged. Navigation is also possible on the Dongola reach from Kerima to Kerma. The principal navigable tributaries of the White Nile are the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Sobat. The Bahr-el-Ghazal is permanently navigable for a distance of 150 miles from Meshra er-Rek to Lake No, and during the flood season (from July to September) small steamers and boats can reach Wau, the capital of the former Bahr-el-Ghazal Province. The Sobat is usually navigable to Gambela by June, by which time it has received sufficient water from the western slopes of the Ethiopian mountains by means of the Baro. It continues navigable until about November. The Blue Nile is navigable from Suki to Roseires from June to December.

The stage has now been reached when something must be said about the actual Nile waters themselves, and their behaviour at different times of the year. The Nile system has been described as 'consisting of a great, steady flowing river fed by the rains of the tropics, controlled by the existence of a vast head reservoir (the great lakes) and several areas of repose, and annually flooded by the accession of a great body of water with which its eastern tributaries are flushed.'¹ The White Nile, though supplying most of the water during the non-flood season, only contributes about one-seventh part of the whole volume of the flood, as the greater proportion of water coming from the great lakes is lost by evaporation in the equatorial swamps. The greater consistency in the supply of water to the White Nile is due to the almost continuous rainfall in the region of the great lakes. The river usually begins to rise about the beginning of May and continues to rise

¹ Sir William Garstin.

slowly, reaching a maximum at Malakal during December. The chief cause of variation in the water level of the White Nile is the seasonal flood of the Sobat from June to October. Owing to the swamps situated along the course of this river, the flood water is delayed and does not reach Egypt until long after the Blue Nile and Atbara floods have passed.

The water supply of the Blue Nile varies from an average of about 120 cubic metres per second in April to about 6,500 cubic metres per second in August. Only a small proportion of this great flood comes from Lake Tana, as was proved by a special mission sent by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works in 1920 and 1921 to investigate the Lake Tana question.¹ The Blue Nile silt, to which reference has already been made, has to be taken into account in all plans for controlling the Nile waters; for, while a river is full of silt, it cannot be dammed to form a reservoir owing to the choking of any such irrigation work by deposits of mud. It is, therefore, necessary to arrange all plans for damming the Nile so as to ensure that they operate only when the water is comparatively free of silt. As in flood-time the main stream is chiefly composed of Blue Nile water and therefore full of silt, the same precautions have to be taken into account in working out schemes for damming the main stream. The White Nile, however, is comparatively free of silt owing to its passage through the swamps of the 'Sudd' region, so that a reservoir south of Khartoum (the Jebel Aulia Dam) can be filled at any time of the year without danger of choking with silt.

Hitherto, the first indication of the behaviour of the Blue Nile has been received from the Nile gauges at Roseires, from which point the water takes 13 days to reach Egypt. Hence, the irrigation authorities in Cairo have only had 13 days' notice of the approach of any unusual flood. A few days of unusually high levels at Roseires would not be serious, as the high wave of water

¹ *Vide* Report of the Mission to Lake Tana by Graham and Black, Cairo, 1926.

so caused would be levelled down to reasonable proportions before reaching Egypt. But, if such high levels last longer than a few days, the situation may easily become dangerous; and may, indeed, threaten Egypt with great damage if the Blue Nile flood comes at the same time as a flood on the Atbara. Moreover, control is rendered more difficult owing to the impossibility of holding up water through fear of silting up the dams. Hitherto there has been no check or control whatever over the flood of the Blue Nile and its tributaries in Ethiopian territories, and the same applied to the Atbara. Now, with a European Power in possession of this great catchment area, there are great opportunities for scientific observation and material action for the benefit of water interests on both sides of the frontier.

Before proceeding to deal with the question of irrigation and the means used to extract the greatest benefit from the Nile water supply, we must be quite clear about the essential differences between the characters of the White and Blue Niles. The White Nile is a slow-flowing stream mainly fed by the constant equatorial rains in the region of the great lakes. Throughout its long course the river flows through comparatively flat country, and much of its water is lost by evaporation in the wide expanse of the lakes and swamps. The flood of the Sobat is the only cause of anything approaching a seasonal disturbance. The Blue Nile, on the other hand, is fed by the seasonal torrential rains of Ethiopia. In its course from the high plateau to the Sudan plain there is a drop of nearly 4,000 feet, so that the character of the river changes from a clear blue river only a few feet deep in the dry season to a raging silt-laden torrent in time of flood. The contributions of the three great tributaries to the general flow of water passing through the dam at Assuan vary considerably according to the season of the year. During the flood in August, September, and October, the Blue Nile contributes 67 per cent, the White Nile 14 per cent, and the Atbara 19 per cent. During the summer season, on the other hand, the Blue Nile contributes 28 per cent,

the White Nile 72 per cent, and the Atbara practically nothing.

It has already been explained that the task facing irrigation engineers is to make use of the water produced by excessive rainfall in the tropical regions of the White Nile, and the mountainous regions of the Blue Nile, for the benefit of the desert regions farther north, where there is practically no rainfall at all. The older system of irrigation in Egypt is known as the 'basin' system, which consists of dividing up the country into large or small areas by means of earth banks. These basins are allowed to flood when the river is high, and crops are sown after the water has been drained off. The basins are filled by means of canals, which take off below the level of a low flood. As the slope of these canals is less than the slope of the river bed, they gradually rise in relation to the land as they run northwards and convey their water to the surface of the soil. Although this system is now confined to Upper Egypt, it is still practised throughout about one-fifth of the total cultivated area. The great disadvantage of this system has been that it is only possible to raise one crop a year. This was overcome to some extent by the digging of wells from which water could be pumped, thereby enabling a second crop to be grown before the next flood-time. This was later superseded by the present system of perennial irrigation with its complicated mechanism of dams, barrages, canals, regulators, and river gauges. While all Lower Egypt and most of Middle Egypt have been converted from the basin to the perennial system, Upper Egypt will be converted in course of time.

In this system, developed on a large scale by Mohammed Ali at the beginning of last century, the land receives water throughout the whole year. The level of the river is raised by means of barrages, above which are the heads of canals, which receive a constant supply of water. Without these barrages it would be impossible to keep the canals fed with water when the Nile is low, owing to the small slope of the river and the great difference

between the level of high and low waters. There are two principal barrages used for perennial irrigation. One is at the head of the Delta, above which are the heads of the main Delta canals ; and there is another at Assiut, above which is the head of the Ibrahimia Canal, supplying Middle Egypt, including the Fayoum, an oasis reclaimed from the desert about 56 miles south of Cairo. The excavation of the Ibrahimia Canal marked the beginning of the perennial system in Upper Egypt. There is a third barrage at Esna, which is at present only used for basin irrigation, and a fourth has recently been constructed at Nag Hamadi for the same purpose. In flood-time a great volume of water flows down the river to the Mediterranean, but from February or March onwards no water is allowed to escape to sea. This escape is prevented by closing the sluices of the Delta Barrage near Cairo, and by building earth banks across the river mouths near the sea. These banks not only keep salt water from entering the river, but also provide irrigation for a certain amount of land in the extreme north of Egypt by means of water which has flowed back into the river from cultivated areas. When the flood rises in July or August, there is more water than the canals can take, so the banks are cut and water is allowed to escape to sea.

The extension of perennial irrigation in Middle Egypt was made possible by the building of the Assuan Dam, converting the valley south of Assuan into a great reservoir. This reservoir is filled after the Nile flood has subsided and the river has become free of silt, but before the water so collected is needed for irrigation. The filling of the dam usually takes place between November and January, and the reservoir is drawn upon for irrigation purposes from March or April until the middle or end of July. This vast supply of water stored in the Assuan reservoir safeguards Egypt from disaster even in the worst possible years. On three occasions the Assuan Dam has been raised¹ in order to increase the capacity of the reservoir, and this irrigation work has now been supplemented by

¹ The Assuan Dam has just been raised for the third time.

the new dam at Jebel Aulia, 29 miles south of Khartoum. This new work, besides serving the purpose of a reservoir, can be used to hold up the waters of the White Nile at the season when the Blue Nile flood is pouring into the main stream at Omdurman.

The total area of land under cultivation in Egypt at present amounts to about 5,566,700 feddans,¹ of which 4,431,700 feddans are cultivated by perennial irrigation, under which system two and sometimes three crops a year are obtained. As the total area of land in Egypt, which can be irrigated by the Nile, amounts to about 7,100,000 feddans, it is obvious that the resources of the Nile system are open to further development. The most obvious source of further supplies of water is reduction of the enormous evaporation losses in the Sudd region, which cause an annual loss of water nearly three times as much as that stored by the Assuan Dam. Various schemes have been carefully studied for dealing with this problem, from which it appears that the summer water supply of Egypt might be increased by an amount nearly equal to that now stored at Assuan by the construction of suitable training works in Equatorial Africa. These would include a dam on the Albert Nile to transform Lake Albert into the largest reservoir in the world, and canalization works in the swamps that would cost many million pounds. In carrying this Nile question to a further stage of development, there is every reason to expect that much good will come from co-operation between British, Italian, and Egyptian engineers with reference to the water supply from a reservoir at Lake Tana and improvement of conditions in the catchment area of the Blue Nile. The total area in the Gezireh district of the Sudan, canalized and irrigated from the reservoir created by the Makwar Dam on the Blue Nile, amounts to over 800,000 feddans. During the flood season there is a great deal more water than is necessary for irrigation in Egypt, but careful regulation is essential in order to get the greatest amount of benefit from the water that is available during

¹ 1 feddan = 1.038 acres.

the lean months. This is done by means of the Assuan Dam and the Assiut, Delta, and Zifta Barrages. While the dam controls the supply according to the needs of the cultivated areas throughout the season, the barrages distribute the water to the main canals.

Although not really belonging to the Nile system, there are two peculiar rivers—the Gash and the Baraka—which flow through Italian East Africa and the Sudan without ever reaching the sea. Like the rivers of Damascus, they flow gaily along for a certain distance and then lose themselves in the ground. The Gash rises in the mountains of Eritrea, flows eastward past Kassala, and then spreads out to lose itself in the plain north of the town. This plain is fertilized by the silt from the river, which is responsible for the Kassala cotton crop. The Baraka also rises in the highlands of Eritrea, but flows northward in the direction of Port Sudan. It, however, spreads out to form a delta in the plain of Tokar, where cotton is also grown in the rich alluvial soil thereby produced. Both these rivers confine their activity to about eighty days in the year, usually between the beginning of July and the end of September. Other peculiar rivers of this sort in Italian East Africa are the Awash, which rises west of Addis Abeba and loses itself in the Danakil Desert; and the Webi Shebeli, which rises in the State of Harar, flows through Italian Somaliland, and continues along the coast of the Indian Ocean to lose itself in a swamp a few miles from the sea near the mouth of the Juba.

We now come to a question of the greatest importance to the whole system of Nile control—the possibility and danger of land erosion. At the time of the Italo-Ethiopian War, the general public in Great Britain and Egypt were much concerned about the passing of Lake Tana into the hands of the Italians. Not only were the facts of the situation misrepresented in the British Press, but alarmist reports of imaginary dangers were freely circulated. The Lake Tana question, and the change which has taken place as a result of the Italian occupation, will be dealt with more fully when describing conditions in the Sudan.

While this so-called 'danger' was largely a product of Fleet Street, that of land erosion is one of real substance with its origin in the highlands of Ethiopia ; but, being of a somewhat technical nature, it is practically unknown to the British public. The danger does not lie in the possibility of the Italians interfering with the flow of the Blue Nile, but in the peaceful development of the large area in Western Ethiopia, where the river receives a large number of tributaries and flows for a long distance before reaching the Sudan frontier. As Italian development is expected to be rapid, it is of the utmost importance that the causes and results of land erosion should be widely known both in Italy and in this country before any damage can be done. Much attention should therefore be given to the methods which the Italians use in developing the catchment areas of Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.

It is now clearly recognized by experts that whereas Egypt and the Sudan can receive more water at certain seasons of the year from a reservoir created by the building of a dam at Lake Tana, no constructive work could cause any positive damaging effect on the flow of the Blue Nile into the Sudan. But this is far from being the case with regard to the catchment area of the Blue Nile and its tributaries, which cover a most extensive area of valuable land. Although much of the Blue Nile Valley cannot be affected owing to the rocky gorges through which the river flows for a considerable part of its course, the conditions of its many tributaries are quite different and are susceptible to serious change. While unwise development of this area would in course of time bring about soil erosion and widespread devastation in this part of Ethiopia, it would at the same time cause disaster to the Nile irrigation system in Egypt and the Sudan by excessive flooding and the silting up of dams.

At present, this part of Ethiopia is thinly populated, and much of the land is covered with forest, scrub, and grasses. This vegetation checks the flow of rain-water to a considerable extent, and has the effect of prolonging the

flood-time of the river. The rain falls in storms, causing spates in the large number of streams that feed the tributaries of the main river. The rains usually begin about March, and by June the grass is everywhere very high. This grass prevents the water from flowing freely, holds a considerable amount of water itself, and gives water time to soak into the soil. By this means, the spates are checked and their erosive power reduced. As the main river represents a collection of innumerable spates of varying size from the whole catchment area, it is much smoother and more regular than its tributaries. Yet, the Blue Nile is very much a river of moods, its behaviour in flood being most capricious. In an ordinary flood, the largest rise or fall in a day at Roseires, where it enters the Sudan plains, is about 2 feet—a great variation for a river of this size. Deforestation, the burning of bush and grass, ploughing, and the breaking-up of the soil are the chief processes likely to lead to land erosion. Also, as the population of a region increases, footpaths made by man and beast increase, thereby providing channels for rain-water to make its way unchecked. It is also important to remember that herds of cattle, and goats to a much greater extent, eat up and destroy wide areas of vegetation. As the rains in these parts are of tropical intensity, and the mountainslopes are steep, vast quantities of valuable soil are washed down the river as silt to Egypt. In these circumstances, the ploughing and loosening of the soil, and the action of rain upon it, together with the other causes mentioned, may be expected to bring about an excessive flood and something of a landslide.

Indeed, it is estimated by irrigation experts that sufficient soil could be washed away in a few decades to destroy the fertility of this part of Ethiopia and at the same time to put the Nile dams out of action. It is not only flood that destroys irrigation systems but also the silt which it contains. Even in present circumstances, the Nile flood has to be allowed to pass freely through the dams at Sennar and Assuan in order to avoid their

destruction by the accumulation of silt. A typical example of soil erosion exists to-day in the United States, where a large area of fertile country has been reduced to a desert. Major F. Newhouse, late Inspector-General of Egyptian Irrigation in the Sudan, sums up the danger of land erosion as follows :

‘ If Abyssinia becomes quiet and peaceful, and the cattle and goats increase, the mountains and plains will be denuded of trees and grass, the countryside will be torn to bits by torrents, the discharge of the Blue Nile will be a monstrous flood every year, and its whole regime will be altered to the certain detriment and possible ruin of Egypt. These are hard words, but a consideration of the present age-long regime of the Nile, which has made Egypt, and the changes that will occur if the mountains of Abyssinia are stripped of forest and its plains are ploughed, will justify them. The present generation has seen similar causes—thoughtless denudation and ploughing of the catchment areas—produce devastation over vast areas in the United States. In Abyssinia, the torrential rains of Central Africa will cause greater damage in a shorter time.’¹

It is evident, however, that Italy has no desire to lose a valuable region of great fertility by failing to take ample precautions in time. Measures for avoiding soil erosion are being carefully studied in the United States. The results of these investigations could be adapted to African conditions, and be put into operation without adding much to the cost of the development of a more or less savage country. But it is essential to take the necessary precautions from the outset, as once the damage is done it cannot be remedied. Dams cannot be unsilted, and land washed away by floods cannot be replaced. In this matter there is an urgent need for the closest co-operation between British, Italian, and Egyptian engineers, who might well visit the United States to make a firsthand

¹ *The Engineer*, 3 December 1937.

study of anti-erosion measures, with a view to taking early action to deal with a grave danger to the vital interests of their respective countries. But this form of co-operation should not stop at averting dangers. With savagery now replaced by European civilization in Ethiopia, it should be possible to make a much greater use of the water supply throughout this whole area for the benefit of all. As the Sobat, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara all have their sources in the Ethiopian highlands, there is ample scope for scientific investigation and negotiations on the vital question of water in North-East Africa.

CHAPTER VI

THE MODERN SUDAN

AS the last two chapters have been in some way a diversion from the main course of this narrative, it is perhaps as well at this point to summarise Egypt's new position before going farther south to deal with the Sudan. Proud of their newly acquired independence, and eager to turn it to the best use, the Egyptians are honestly trying to improve conditions in their country. They believe that, with the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and the accession of a young King to rule over them, all the omens are in favour of progress on national but modern lines. They want to become as self-supporting as possible, and to stand on their own feet in the control of their own transport services. They are anxious to build up Egyptian industries with the same end in view. They realize the necessity of radically improving the living conditions of the great mass of the Egyptian people. Beyond their frontiers they feel that the opportunity has now come to increase their share in the defence and administration of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and to benefit more from the development of that country. What is more, they see in the development of Italian East Africa a chance of co-operating with Italy to their advantage ; and this adds to their natural desire to extend their influence in a southerly direction. Three questions are of special interest to Egypt. With the Nile as the life-blood of their country, all Egyptians are supremely interested in the question of water supply, and their attention is now turned to what will be the outcome of Italy's occupation of the territory containing the source

of the Blue Nile. Also, with 15 per cent of the Concession reverting to Egypt in 28 years, they are much concerned with the future of the Canal. They further realize that conditions of transport in North-East Africa are about to undergo a complete transformation, and that their position is now affected by the fact that Italy's vital communications with her new Empire run through Egyptian territory. With these considerations in mind we can pass on to what is happening south of the Egyptian frontier.

The Sudan is not a part of the British Empire. Being neither a colony nor a protectorate, it has nothing to do with the Colonial Office ; but being an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, it comes under the direction of the Foreign Office. A 'condominium' is a hybrid form of government into which the rights of two sovereign states are merged. Perhaps this definition makes the case clearer.

'A territory may be held in condominium by two or more Powers, as is the case with the Sudan, which since 1899 has been so held by Great Britain and Egypt. By this is meant, not that there are two sovereigns over the same territory—a thing which by the nature of the case is impossible—but that the one sovereignty is vested in a body made up of the Governments of the two Powers that exercise the condominium.'¹

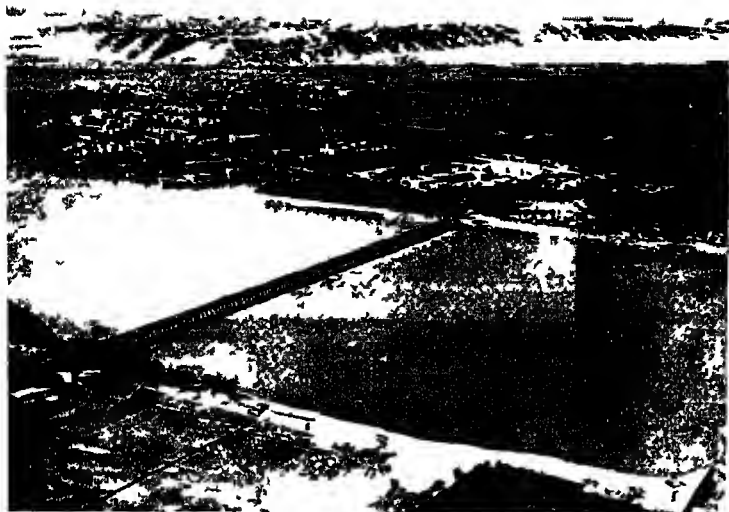
The only other example of this in the world is the Anglo-French Condominium in the New Hebrides group of islands in the Southern Pacific. At the Governor General's Palace in Khartoum, on all Government buildings, and on the Sudan Government steamers, the British and Egyptian flags are flown side by side. While on buildings the British flag flown is the Union Jack, on steamers the Egyptian flag is flown at the bow and the Blue Ensign at the stern.

¹ Lawrence. (International Law.)

The Sudan covers a vast area varying from sandy, sun-scorched desert to sub-tropical forest. Although thinly populated, it covers a million square miles—much the same as the combined area of Great Britain and Ireland, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Denmark. A failure to realize the extent of the country accounts for many of the misunderstandings about what happens there and what can happen. It is only to the north of Khartoum that the country is in any way like Egypt, and there it is merely desert through which the Nile flows on its long and leisurely journey northward. Although rain falls in Khartoum from June to September, the desert to the north is practically rainless. South of the capital, on both sides of the fertile Gezireh that lies in the angle formed by the Blue and White Niles, the country opens out into sandy plains. To the east are the mountains of Ethiopia, and to the west the desert of French Equatorial Africa. These plains are well wooded in a sense, and there is enough rain to provide grazing for the large flocks and herds, and for the cultivation of millet and sesame, as well as plentiful supply of gum arabic.

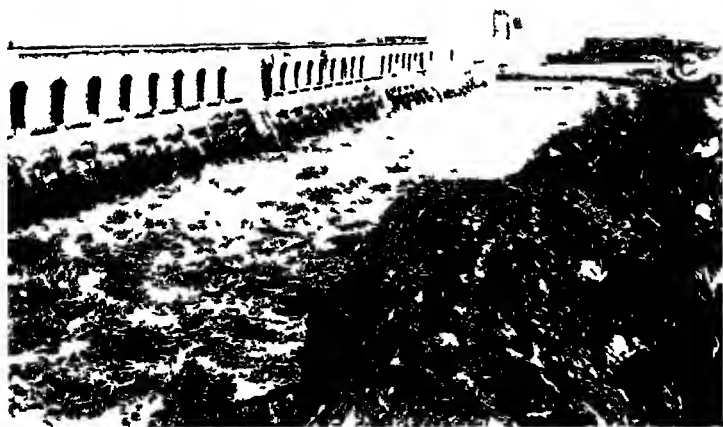
Farther south conditions become sub-tropical with increasing rainfall during the summer months. Here the vegetation becomes denser, and the country becomes more broken up and swampy; soil takes the place of sand, and cattle give life to the landscape. In the most southerly part of all, the climate is equatorial, with rains lasting from February or March to October or November. In spring and late autumn these rains are torrential. While in the winter the climate of many parts of the Sudan is very pleasant, this is quickly followed by intense dry heat accompanied in many places by a hot wind. My experience of Wadi Halfa is an example of this. At the beginning of April the climate was ideal, so much so that a journey to the Second Cataract in a motor-launch immediately after lunch was an ideal way of spending the afternoon. Seventeen days later I landed in an aeroplane about midday to find myself in a positive inferno.

The imposing Government buildings of Khartoum, and



Pl to Imperial Airways

THE ASSIUT BARRAGE



THE MAKWAR DAM, BLUE NILE



KHARIOUM FROM THE AIR



THE UPPER NILE SUDD REGION

the efficiency of the Sudan Government railways, steamers, and hotels, give a false impression of a country in which the European population is confined to a mere handful of British officials, British and foreign merchants, and a few missionaries. The great mass of the population, estimated at 6,000,000, is composed of native peoples of different races, languages, and characteristics, living in districts differing greatly from one another. Although the classification of the native population is difficult owing to the mixture of race in many parts, the natives can be divided roughly into three more or less distinct groups. (1) The Hamites and Arabs of the desert zone in the north; (2) the Arabs, Nubas, and negroids of the central region; and (3) the negro tribes of the southern Sudan.

In the stretch of desert between Khartoum and Wadi Halfa the people who live in the villages on the banks of the Nile are a mixed crowd, most of whom are Nubians or Berberines in the provinces of Halfa and Dongola, and Arabs in the province of Berber. They are all Moslems by religion, as are most of the Sudanese with Arab blood. These Nubians and Berberines are much the same as those found in Upper Egypt south of Assuan, and they speak the same Nubian dialects as well as Arabic. The Arabs of Berber, on the other hand, differ little from the people of the central Sudan, and only speak Arabic. The country lying back from the river in Dongola, Halfa, and Berber is usually regarded as desert, but this is not altogether true. While west of Halfa there certainly is a complete absence of anything that could benefit either man or beast, there is a little grass and a scanty supply of water west of Dongola. Here there is a scattering of nomads with camels, whose peace is often disturbed by Numidian bandits who swoop across the arid trackless waste from the highlands of Ennedi, some ten days distant, mounted on specially trained camels, and carrying each a rifle and a sword, a skinful of water, a small bag of grain and a twist of bark for rope—and nothing else but a high heart for their adventure.¹ To the west of Berber, where conditions of

¹ Sir Harold MacMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*.

life are more secure, the Arabs are more numerous, while eastward towards the Red Sea coast there are similar nomads of a somewhat different type. Between the Egyptian frontier and the River Atbara there is a strong race of people known as the 'Fuzzies,' many of whom speak the Tigrine language of northern Ethiopia. Wild as they are, some of these people are sufficiently civilized to cultivate cotton in the Gash and Baraka districts¹ of the Kassala province, or to become occasional labourers at Port Sudan.

The central Sudan consists of the provinces of Darfur, Kordofan, the White Nile, the Blue Nile, Khartoum, and the southern half of the Kassala province. Although there are certain common characteristics in all these regions, there are just as many ways in which the country and its inhabitants differ. In the northern part of Kordofan and in the part of the Kassala province west of the Atbara, there are huge stretches of land where nomadic Arabs find sufficient grazing for their camels and sheep. These Arabs live on their dealings in livestock, and are also to be found in large numbers in the White Nile province, on the east bank of the Blue Nile, in the Nuba Mountains of southern Kordofan, and to a lesser extent in northern Darfur, and the neighbourhood of Khartoum. These people are the typical nomads of the Sudan, whose movements depend on the need of water and grazing grounds for their camels, flocks, and herds. Another set of people of Arab extraction is the settled population of the central Sudan, who live in small villages consisting of square mud huts with pointed roofs made of thatch. For their living they depend on their livestock and on crops raised by irrigation from the Nile or from ordinary rainfall. Some also occupy themselves in the collection of gum arabic from the acacia forests of the interior, thereby adding to their small resources. In the district of the Ghezireh, irrigated by water from the Makwar Dam, is another large Arab population occupied in the growing of cotton. But, while the tenants

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

of the cotton fields are chiefly local natives, the labour employed in its cultivation comes from all parts of the country.

Between the central Sudan and the southern regions, inhabited by pagan negroes, are the people known as the Baggara. These horsemen and owners of cattle cover an immense area west of the Nile stretching as far as southern Darfur. They live in camps and spend much of their time hunting elephant, giraffe, and other big game with their large broad-bladed spears. In the central provinces there are also a large number of non-Arab tribes, who in nature and characteristics are as different from one another as they are from the Arab people among whom they live. For example, in the south-east of Kordofan, a region about 50,000 square miles in extent, there is a pagan race of black aboriginal Nuba who live in mountain caves and worship the spirits of the dead. But there are many other native types scattered about, including those from West Africa who are confined to the eastern districts.

We now come to the southern Sudan, which is inhabited by a large number of pagan negro tribes varying greatly in size, colour, character, and language. Apart from the Nuba and other tribes mentioned above, these southern peoples can be divided into two distinct groups—the long-legged people of the Nile who keep cattle, and the smaller and the more progressive people who spend their time cultivating land. Among the cattle-owning people are the Shilluk, who live on the banks of the White Nile between Kaka and Lake No. They are an exceptionally fine-looking race and have a peculiar habit of standing on one leg. These people are regarded as the best fighters in the Sudan. The Dinkas, on the other hand, are lazy and second-rate hunters. These somewhat treacherous savages exist in large numbers in the swamps of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, but are more prosperous than the Shilluks. More warlike are the Nuer, the most powerful and numerous tribe of the Sobat region, who have always been responsible for a good deal of trouble. There are

also the Anuak, who inhabit the marshes of the Pibor and the Ethiopian lowlands east of the Akobo. These also are well qualified in peace-breaking.

Among the smaller and more enterprising negroes are a large number of different tribes in the extreme south-east, whose description would involve a mere catalogue of names. Some of these have much in common with their neighbours across the Ethiopian and Kenya frontiers, which is the cause of much inter-tribal fighting and frontier difficulties. One of the most remarkable people of the south are the Nyam-Nyam, of whom there are about two million in an area of about 48,000 square miles. They live in the highlands of the Nile-Congo watershed, and only a part of their territory is within the Sudan. The Nyam-Nyam are a round-headed, chocolate-brown people with long, thick frizzled hair. They are by far the most intelligent and well-organized of the black races. They are first-rate hunters and fighters, and make excellent black troops. In former days they were notorious cannibals.

The northern Sudan is Sunni Moslem by religion, while the southern parts are almost entirely pagan. The difference in religion practically goes alongside with that of race. The Arabs, Nubians, and others of the north are entirely Moslem, and are always liable to burst out in fanatical excitement. The appearance of Halley's Comet in 1910 was an occasion of much fanaticism in the Sudan and was the cause of a good deal of disturbance. Islam has made very little progress among the negro population of the south, except to a very small extent among the people of the western Bahr-el-Ghazal. There has never been any desire among the southern tribes to become Moslems, and among many of these people it is regarded as a disgrace to be converted. If a Shilluk makes a journey to the north and returns a convert to Islam, he is regarded as a renegade. At the same time, these southern tribes offer little opportunity to the Christian missionary. The only people at all divided between Islam and paganism are those of the Nuba mountains,

although the majority still persevere with their pagan rites and persistent belief in magic.

The Sudan Government has always followed a policy of encouraging Islam in all its legitimate modes of expression. Not only have they built and maintained many mosques throughout the country, but they forbid Christian propaganda and proselytism throughout the northern Sudan. Christian churches and schools are only allowed in Khartoum itself, and the greatest care is taken to make it quite clear to the natives that the attendance of their children at such schools is entirely voluntary. Even in the Gordon College the Christian students form a very small percentage of the total number receiving instruction. Although there are missionary schools at Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman, no Christian missionary is allowed to preach in any other part of the northern Sudan. In all government schools and colleges the teaching of the Koran and the Arabic language are prominent in the programmes of work. This Government policy of supporting Islam in the northern Sudan has found its reward in the loyalty of the Ulemas and leaders of Moslem thought throughout the country.

In the south there are a large and varied selection of mysterious religious beliefs among the many different tribes. Among these peoples the Government encourage Christian missions, which have been given definite geographical areas in which their activities are authorized. Among these are the Austrian Roman Catholic Mission (present status unknown), the Church Missionary Society, the American Mission to the Shilluks, and the Sudan United Mission to the Dinkas. Although conversions are few in number, the medical work of all these missions has been of decided benefit to these people. No ancient history or common tradition unites the people of the Sudan, who cannot be regarded as a nation. The Arabic-speaking tribes of the north are to some extent bound together by community of language, religion, customs, and interests, but they have little in common with the pagan peoples of the south with their great variety of race, religion, and

language. Yet the waters of the Nile are common to both, and they all come under the same general laws.

The population is far from evenly distributed and, as may be imagined, the valleys of the Blue and White Niles are more densely populated than any other parts of the country. Khartoum province is the most densely populated of all, while in the out-lying districts the greatest density probably exists in parts of the Province of Bahr-el-Ghazal. The Shilluk country is also fairly crowded, and has the appearance of a continuous village. Naturally the parts with fewest inhabitants are the northern desert regions in the direction of Wadi Halfa, where there is only one inhabitant to every three square miles. In these dried up parts the people are either nomadic or live in small towns or villages on or near the Nile. In the moist and more fertile south they are scattered in villages forming definite settlements.

Throughout the Sudan visitors are always impressed by the orderliness and cleanliness of everything. The people have the air of being perfectly contented and proud of their race, and they go about the work for which their education and intelligence fits them with a desire to give satisfaction. The degrading system of 'baksheesh' is forbidden. There is a great deal of self-respect among the natives of the Sudan, and there is no doubt that this is partly due to the influence of the specially selected British officials, who have administered the various districts since the reconquest of the country in 1898.

Although Khartoum is the capital, the centre of Sudanese activities is wrapped up in a collection of towns at the juncture of the Blue and White Niles. The three towns of Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman together form the headquarters of the trade of the country. Mussolini once asked me the population of Khartoum, and I had to admit that I had not the faintest notion! Statistical figures of population seem to create some definite impression in the minds of foreigners; to the average Englishman, few of whom know the popula-

tion of London, these mere numbers mean nothing. In any case, the answer to this apparently simple question is not quite so easy as it seems; for the population of Khartoum itself is one thing and that of the whole Khartoum complex is another. While Khartoum itself has a population of 46,676, Khartoum North has one of 107,720, and Omdurman one of 110,959. Khartoum is the capital of the country and the seat of government, and is to a large extent Europeanized with wide streets and imposing buildings. Although it contains many shops and stores, its market is much smaller than that of Omdurman with which it is connected by an electric tram service running over the Omdurman Bridge. While Khartoum North is mainly composed of barracks, storehouses, workshops, and the dockyard of the Sudan Government Steamers, Omdurman is one of the most important native towns in the whole of Africa.

Khartoum is the capital of a land as large as British India. The present city, planned by Lord Kitchener, is spread-out with long wide streets. Most of the buildings are surrounded by trees, and the more important ones are situated on the tree-shaded embankment along the Blue Nile. Here are the Governor-General's Palace, where Gordon met his tragic fate, and the more important government offices. Further up the river, beyond the Blue Nile bridge, is Gordon College, an educational establishment which is run on English Public School lines with British house-masters and native prefects. While native customs are maintained in the matter of clothing, food, and bedding, the boys make their own beds, sweep out their dormitories and wash their own clothes. They play football twice a week. The Grand Hotel, belonging to the Sudan Railways and run like all the other Sudan hotels by a Swiss manager, is the only hotel of its kind between Assuan and Johannesburg. The Imperial Airways flying-boats, which alight on the Nile at Gordon's Tree, bring a daily influx of passengers, but they come just before sundown and are off next morning at the first streak of dawn. There is a vast difference between the

appearance of those outward bound from England and those homeward bound from South Africa. They are duly labelled by the colour of their faces and the clothes they wear.

Across the White Nile is Omdurman, which stretches for about seven miles along the banks of the river and houses a hundred thousand natives of various tribes. In the last twenty years this huge market centre has been converted from an unplanned net-work of twisted lanes into a town with open spaces and good streets, where many of the leading merchants of the country have their head offices. Although many of the walls and houses are made of mud, the bazaars are a credit to the town. The whole area is remarkably clean, and the visitor can spend hours without being assailed by the indescribable odours so common in most Oriental cities, but the main interest lies in the people. Visitors, and especially those who know the East, are impressed by their extraordinary decorum and personal cleanliness, and by the complete absence of beggars, whose presence in most native towns makes progress slow and objectionable. There is no shouting or extravagance of gesture, and bargaining is carried on without loud protestations. Salutations are exchanged courteously and often in silence. There are no hawkers. Each man takes a pride in showing his handiwork, and will enter into a long and eager conversation with anyone who shows an intelligent interest in it; but he will leave the impression that the sale of it is a matter of comparative indifference to him. In recent years, the local craftsmen have given their attention to ivory-turning in addition to the silver work in which they have long excelled, and it is interesting to watch the workers making with primitive tools the wares which are afterwards sold in Khartoum and in England.

Here, in the great square of Omdurman half a century ago, all turned their faces to Mecca when the Mahdi called the faithful to prayer in the fiery setting of the desert sun. Here also is the old palace of the Khalifa Abdullah, the prison of Slatin Pasha, and Kitchener's

headquarters after the battle which crushed the Dervish power. At the back of the town are the Kerreri Hills and the field of Omdurman, with its monument to the 21st Lancers and their memorable charge against fanatical hordes fired with religious hatred. The second largest native town is Wad Medani on the Blue Nile, which is the centre of a large cotton growing area, and has several most up-to-date ginneries for ginning the cotton from the Gezireh. All the other towns, with the exception of Port Sudan and Suakin, chiefly consist of collections of huts varying in number, with the addition of a few European buildings. Yet many of these towns are important market centres for large areas. The only hotels in the country are at Khartoum, Port Sudan, Wadi Halfa, and Juba, but they are all maintained at the high standard of the Sudan Government Railways.

The Government of the Sudan is based on the Agreement of 1899 which gave birth to the Condominium. The supreme authority is in the hands of the Governor-General, who is appointed by Egypt on the recommendation of the British Government. For legislative and executive purposes he is now assisted by a Council much on the same lines as the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India.¹ All ordinances, laws, and regulations are made by the Governor-General in Council. Although these have to be notified to Cairo, they are not subject to objection or amendment by the Egyptian authorities. Decentralization is the keynote of government in the Sudan, so that Provincial Governors have much freedom of action and are given wide powers. There are eight provinces altogether, and in each of these the local Governor is personally responsible to the Governor-General for the state of his province and the carrying out of the Government's policy and regulations. But the various technical departments in Khartoum co-operate in the provinces with the Governors and their staffs, and in these cases the head of each technical department is directly responsible to the Governor-

¹ A similar council has now been set up by the Viceroy of Ethiopia.

General. These posts are all held by British officials, most of whom have held commissions in the regular army. The Provincial Governors practically hold supreme authority in keeping order, in seeing that justice is administered, and in allocating duties to their district commissioners, *mamurs*, police officers, and clerical staff. The *mamurs* are native police officers and magistrates of districts, and are either Egyptian or Sudanese. In most cases their employment in these responsible positions has been justified, and an increasing use is being made of the Sudanese for minor administrative and clerical posts under the Government. The Provincial Governor is also the chief magistrate of his province, and he is responsible for drawing up the provincial budget and for administering the local finances. But he is not left altogether to his own resources, although interference and red tape are reduced to a minimum. He receives guidance and supervision from the Governor-General and his three secretaries,¹ whom he is expected to consult in matters of policy.

The District Commissioners, who belong to the Sudan Civil Service, are the local representatives of the Provincial Governor in each district. Their responsibilities and work are of a most varied description, and it is on these men that depends to a large extent the good condition of the country and the welfare of its inhabitants. In enumerating the extraordinary diversity of jobs with which they have to deal I cannot do better than quote the words of Sir Harold MacMichael,² who has spent a large part of his life in the Sudan Service. 'He hears civil and criminal cases, supervises police and prisons, arranges for the assessment and collection of taxes, patches up feuds, makes simple roads, bridges and houses, assists in the compilation of maps, encourages economic development, enforces quarantine, and frequently acts both as medical and matrimonial adviser to his constituents. He and his Governor in combination form the mainstay of the body

¹ The Civil Secretary, Legal Secretary, and Financial Secretary.

² *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*. London, 1934.

politic, for they are in touch at every turn with some aspect of native life, and upon their reputation for fairness and honour, the sanity of their outlook and their capacity for understanding and sympathy, depend in a pre-eminent degree the good name of the Government as a whole.' Under the British District Commissioners are native administrative officers, some of whom are Egyptian and others Sudanese ; but the policy adopted is one of employing as many Sudanese as are capable of filling these posts. Local sheikhs and chiefs also have varying powers of limited authority over their tribesmen, and this even applies to some of the nomadic tribes. As far back as 1922, some three hundred sheikhs of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes had powers with the full support of government authority.

While in Europe the execution of justice and administrative duties form two quite distinct departments of Government, in Africa conditions of life often make it desirable that both duties should be carried out by one man. There is a great deal in the argument that, if a sheikh or chief can dispense justice to the satisfaction of his people, he should gradually be given further responsibilities in attending to their welfare and administering the country in which they live. This is the system followed in the Sudan, and there is always the necessary British supervision to reduce serious mistakes to a minimum.

In the department of justice there is the usual High Court for the trial of civil cases, comprising a Court of Appeal and Courts of Original Jurisdiction. Under this are the provincial and district courts, presided over by British judges, or in their absence by the Provincial Governor or District Commissioner.

Criminal justice is administered either by single magistrates or by courts consisting of three magistrates. Although in most cases the magistrates are either British judges, Provincial Governors, or District Commissioners, they are sometimes more junior officials ; and in some cases native notables are appointed as magistrates to sit as members of courts. Throughout the country tribal

law and custom are administered by native sheikhs and chiefs recognized or appointed by the Government, although there is always appeal from their decision to a Government official and capital sentences cannot be passed. But within these limits the Government refrains as far as possible from interfering in the application of tribal codes however elaborate. In other words, customary law is definitely recognized as far as it is applicable and not contrary to justice, equity, and good conscience. The safeguard against injustice in serious cases is a necessary confirmation of sentences either by the Provincial Governor or the Governor-General himself. In domestic cases, where the parties concerned are Moslems, the law of Islam is administered in special courts by Kadis, who are paid by the Government and are under the supervision of the Grand Kadi. One of the more important functions of Gordon College is to educate young natives for the position of local Kadi, and the local confidence in the administration of Moslem justice has for some time been steadily increasing.

Few territories show the British capacity to control native races in so favourable a light as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty has given a new stimulus to a policy of gradually encouraging the Sudanese themselves to participate more than ever in the Government of their own country.¹ Although this process must be slow and for some considerable time confined to junior officials, the tendency now is to replace junior British and Egyptian officials in outlying districts by Sudanese wherever possible, and gradually to give higher administrative and judicial posts to Egyptians as well as to British subjects. This should in course of time produce a better balance in the representation of the two partners in this hybrid form of administration.

The system of ruling through the chiefs, so widely practised in the Sudan, raises a multitude of most interesting questions, but it is only possible in a general

¹ The Sudanese now form 73·4 per cent of the classified staff in the Government, compared with 50·9 per cent in 1930 and 36·8 in 1920.

description of this kind to give a few examples. The chief aim of a District Commissioner is to understand as far as possible the people over whom he rules, and to obtain their confidence with a view to eventually winning their affection. In this, of course, he is up against many difficulties. One of these is the well-grounded conviction of the Moslem that his faith in his religion is much stronger than that of the average Christian. Even the pagan is convinced that the powers of his 'rain maker' or 'witch doctor' are such as belong to no European; and his convictions in this respect are much deeper than any of our religious beliefs. He may become very much attached to his British superior, but his inner self rather holds in contempt the European attitude towards religion which the native regards as the most important thing in life.

Another point to remember is that the native is feudal by nature, and that it is utterly useless to adopt towards him an attitude of 'all men are equal and we are all brothers.' This abstract notion is merely despised by a man whose ancestors for generations have respected and upheld the authority of their chief in a primitive land. It is therefore essential for European administrators to make it their business to see that the natives over whom they rule respect and obey their chief. If the chief becomes disloyal or loses the respect of his own people, he must be replaced by another chief; but the choice of the successor must be left to the people themselves with the approval of the European administrator. Loyalty on the part of the chief, on the other hand, should always receive ample support, even if a certain amount of inefficiency has to be overlooked. At the same time, if too much latitude is given to a chief, he may abuse his powers and use them for what he considered to be his own benefit. If there is too much interference, injustice is likely to result owing to ignorance of the underlying causes of trouble, and the people are more than likely to ignore the authority of their own national leaders.

In many of the tribal customs the Sudan administrator has not only to weed out the good from the bad, but has

to pick out those which, although apparently unreasonable, are based on tradition and may well be used as the foundations of future developments. While cannibalism, human sacrifice, slavery, etc., can be condemned at first hand, some features of primitive witchcraft and occult methods of healing may well be used in some good direction. After all, if we want African savages to do something which we think to be for their benefit and for the good of their community, we can hardly expect them to do so for the same reasons or in the same way as we do.

One of the main problems before the administrator is to find the happy mean between a blind accordance of support, which may encourage the chief to ignore public opinion and perpetrate injustice without the fear of being brought to book, and a refusal of support which will cause him to lose prestige and authority and be no longer able to compose differences between his subjects. It is useless for the white man to aim at himself becoming *de facto* chief of a native tribe. Even if for a time he were to succeed, an impossible vacuum would in due course be created by his removal or retirement. It would also be impossible for him, however great his sympathy or his knowledge of native lore, both to retain for long those qualities which fit his race to rule backward peoples, and at the same time to 'think black' so successfully that the natives would accept his rulings on their merits. If he identified himself so thoroughly with them that they came to regard him as one of themselves, he would *ipso facto* lose his racial prestige—if not his racial qualities—for 'familiarity breeds contempt' as much in one part of the world as in another, and vulgarization must always impair value.

'To rule is the administrator's duty and his privilege, but he will be the better ruler for being also guide, philosopher and friend to his people, and the measure of his success will be the respect in which the people hold their chiefs.'¹

¹ Sir Harold MacMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*.

One of the most remarkable developments in the Sudan has been in education, although this only applies to the northern provinces where the people are chiefly Arab and Moslem. Here education is for the most part in the hands of the Government, and Gordon College at Khartoum is the institution that gives strength to the whole system. Preparatory education is carried out at ninety-eight elementary schools, from which the more successful pupils pass on to the intermediate schools. These, which are eleven in number, prepare boys for entry into Gordon College or for direct appointment to minor Government posts. Gordon College is a large secondary school of nearly three hundred pupils, who are trained for Government service and various forms of private occupations. While previously the chief object of the College was to train natives of the Sudan for minor Government posts, development of the country in more recent years has opened up other occupations for educated natives. In the Sudan the clamour for Government posts is much less pronounced than in most Oriental or African countries, chiefly due to the complete absence of any prospect of personal gain. The course at the College lasts for four years, and the instruction given varies according to whether the pupil wants a literary or scientific education. This is certainly one of the finest educational institutions in Africa, and results have proved its great value in raising the standard of life among the people of the northern Sudan.

A visit to these imposing buildings on the banks of the Nile, which have the appearance of an English public school or one of the newer colleges at Oxford, is a revelation. While the system is as far as possible on European lines, the Moslem way of life is encouraged in its best aspects. There are British and native instructors, and the attitude of the pupils towards their work is much more like that of University students than that of ordinary school-boys. Higher education is at present limited to a School of Medicine and a School of Law, for which pupils are prepared at Gordon College. There are also post-

secondary schools for the training of young men in agriculture, veterinary science, and engineering; and there are technical schools at Omdurman and Atbara, those trained at the latter being apprenticed to the engineering workshops of the Sudan Government Railways.

In the northern Sudan there are, besides the system of education already described, a number of non-Government schools managed by Europeans and some purely native schools. There are also Koranic schools, subsidized by the Government, which give a little education to a large number of boys. The education of girls is in the hands of the Government and is confined to elementary education. In contrast to this rather elaborate system in the north, education in the south appears to be of a very simple nature. It is almost entirely in the hands of missionaries, whose schools are subsidized and inspected by the Government. The education varies according to the faculty and intelligence of the local natives, but never reaches a high level. As in all countries of this kind, the carrying of education to the higher grades cuts both ways. While it certainly benefits the people materially by fitting them for employment, raising their standard of life, it also produces a tendency to discontent arising out of an incomplete picture of the world and life in general.

In a country covering so vast an area and occupying so important a position both from the British and Egyptian point of view, it was surprising in 1938 to see the meagre measures taken for its defence and the maintenance of public security. The armed forces merely consisted of two battalions of British infantry at Khartoum, a small Sudan Defence Force (strength about 4,500), distributed throughout the country, and a mere representation of the Royal Air Force at Khartoum. Yet public security in most parts of the country was good and reinforcements could be obtained from Egypt quickly if necessary.

In recent years most of the trouble in the Sudan has occurred in the districts near the Ethiopian frontiers, where in many places the border-line takes little account of racial considerations. For example, the territories of the

large nomad tribes of the Beni Amer of Eritrea¹ and the Anuak of Ethiopia¹ are practically cut in two by the frontier line. On the Eritrean frontier the nomad naturally wants to move his flocks and herds from one pasturage to another according to the season of the year, and this makes him come down every autumn from the Eritrean hills to the plains of Kassala and Atbara. Yet in the days before the Italo-Ethiopian War friendly relations between the Italians in Eritrea and the British in the Sudan succeeded in confining trouble here to spasmodic bursts of brigandage. On the Ethiopian frontier there was quite another story to tell. In many parts the frontier had never been properly fixed, and until recently there was continual trouble in many districts. Continuous raiding went on from the Ethiopian side, and added to this was a constant traffic of slave-raiders, slave-smugglers, arms-smugglers, and ivory-poachers. The tribes of the south-eastern Sudan suffered from constant raids by the Galla, Anuak, and other Ethiopian hillsmen. The Anuak are said to have acquired 25,000 rifles in one year, and the Sudanese tribes living between the frontier and the Bahr-el-Jebel got into the habit of buying rifles from Ethiopian merchants in exchange for ivory. These war-like tribes were thus free to indulge in their favourite pastime of inter-tribal feuds, which they carried out with a ferocity creating something like chaos in this corner of Anglo-Egyptian territory. The situation became so bad that new military posts had to be set up and punitive expeditions constantly sent out to restore order. As the Ethiopian side of the frontier provided a sanctuary for every kind of evil-doer, the task of the Sudan authorities was not an easy one.

The Sudan has as yet been little affected by Italy's occupation of Ethiopia except in so far as the frontier districts are concerned. There is no longer any raiding from the Ethiopian side of the frontier, and the smuggling of arms has been reduced to a minimum. This is due to the systematic control of the arms traffic by the Sudanese

¹ Now part of Italian East Africa.

authorities on the spot and to the excellent relations between the British and Italian frontier officials. As most of the latter are chosen from among English-speaking Italians, the relations at the frontier posts are such that local politics are merged into pleasant social relations. At Gambela, where there is a British concession for the navigation of the Baro, I found the British and Italian officials living and working together in the greatest harmony. This happy state of affairs has superseded a long period when Ethiopian raids were the curse of the Sudan frontier, and formed the subject-matter of many pages in most Sudan Government reports. When the Italians occupied the Ethiopian frontier districts and began a systematic collection of native arms and ammunition, there was a natural desire on the part of the inhabitants to try to sell arms to the Sudan rather than give them to the Italians. This movement, however, was frustrated on both sides of the frontier.

The frontier line between Ethiopia and the Sudan has been in some parts demarcated; but there are districts, mainly in the south, where small exchanges of territory are necessary to regularize the position brought about by the nomadic nature of frontier tribes. As in the case of Eritrea, there are tribes which really belong to Ethiopia but live during certain seasons in the Sudan; and there are others in the Sudan which cross into Ethiopia for grazing purposes. Although these irregularities present no actual difficulties at the moment, the whole frontier line will have to be reviewed as a result of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. The Italian-Sudanese frontier now runs from Ras Kasar, a point on the Red Sea coast about half-way between Port Sudan and Massawa, to Lake Rudolf, where the frontier lines of Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Kenya join.

While previous to the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty the Anglo-Egyptian partnership in the Sudan was distinctly one-sided in favour of Britain, the new situation is calculated to bring about a more even balance in course of time. British interests in a country which they occupied

'by right of conquest,' are to a large extent wrapped up with those of Egypt, but there is the additional consideration that much British capital has been sunk in the Sudan for its pacification and development. Egypt's interests in this country are based on two major considerations—the security of her southern frontier and the safeguarding of the Nile waters. For a long time the Egyptians have wanted a greater share in the administration and defence of this southern territory, and the question of the Sudan has always loomed large in all treaty negotiations between Great Britain and Egypt. There has even been trouble over this question during periods of political agitation against British influence in Egypt, but it is hoped that this now belongs to the past. Also, there has long been a certain feeling of jealousy in Egypt over the fact that the Sudan can draw off more water from the Nile and thereby reduce the amount available for irrigation further downstream.

We have seen that, as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, Egyptians are to have their share in the higher administrative and judicial posts of the Sudan Government, but there are many other directions in which their participation in the life of the country will be increased. In principle, the Egyptian Army has returned to the Sudan after an absence of some years, but in 1938 it was only represented by a commanding officer and a few detachments of troops. The Egyptian representation was to be brought up to establishment as soon as a sufficient number of trained men were available and the necessary equipment had been provided. But with Egypt the question of the Sudan is largely one of prestige. The Egyptians feel that in an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium they should have an equal share. To bring this about at once would neither be in their interests nor in the interests of anyone else. If such a policy were adopted, many Egyptian officials would find themselves in a position of inferiority; and this would be still more damaging to their prestige than their absence from the country. When Egypt is fully represented in the Sudan, it is of the utmost

importance to the larger interests of Egypt in North-East Africa that those holding responsible positions should be fully qualified to represent their own country with distinction, and to concentrate their endeavours on the welfare of the Sudanese.

CHAPTER VII

SUDAN TRADE AND TRANSIT

OWING to the Italian occupation of Ethiopia and the development of this varied collection of rich agricultural regions, British and Egyptian interests in the Sudan have been increased by the addition of an entirely new factor of great importance. Trade and transit between the Sudan and Ethiopia are in a process of transformation from methods of the early Middle Ages to those of the twentieth century. The whole significance of the Sudan as a factor in North-East Africa is about to undergo a radical change. Instead of being a poor country, with a comparatively small trade and primitive means of transport across its frontiers, this central region is likely to increase in wealth and importance as Ethiopian development goes forward and Egypt pushes farther southwards. Although increased agricultural production and trade will probably play some part in this progressive movement, the future of the Sudan lies mainly in transit, by railway, water, road, and air. Recent developments in aviation and motor transport have already shown the Sudan what is likely to be in store for her, and Italian road builders will show that projects hitherto regarded as impracticable are not only possible but profitable. We have seen how modern aviation has bridged the great gulfs separating the Sudan from her neighbours and from Europe. What will be the result of further development in civil aviation it is impossible to say ; but it is quite certain that this development is still at quite an early stage. In any case, the effect of material development in the Sudan will not be confined to inanimate results.

Progress will lead to a higher standard of life, to a greater degree of civilization, and to a wider appreciation by the Sudanese people of the world in which they live.

Although communications in the Sudan are at present adequate to meet the needs of the country, the time is rapidly approaching when this will no longer be the case. For the Ethiopian traffic via Port Sudan will make increasing demands on the railway and steamer services as well as on such roads as already exist. With the signing of an Anglo-Italian trade agreement, this transit movement will begin, but its increase in volume will entirely depend on what steps are taken in the Sudan to meet it. At present there are over 2,000 miles of Government railways and over 2,400 miles of rivers navigated by Government steamers. With two exceptions the roads are merely tracks. Civil aviation is advancing by leaps and bounds, and Khartoum is becoming the central pivot of a vast network of African air lines.

The Sudan railway system begins at Wadi Halfa and runs south through Abu Hamed and Atbara to Khartoum. From Atbara, where the headquarters and workshops are situated, there is a line to Port Sudan and Suakin. South of Khartoum, the line continues as far as Sennar, on the Blue Nile, where it is divided into two sections, one running west, the other east. The former runs through Kosti on the White Nile to El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan; the latter crosses the Makwar Dam and runs through Gedaref and Kassala to join the Atbara-Port Sudan line at Haiya Junction. Although this railway system serves a very small part of the country, it connects up the more important centres and is efficiently maintained. The accommodation for passengers is equal to any in Europe, and the standard of cleanliness is much higher than that encountered in many European countries.

Owing to the exertions and enterprise of the Sudan Government, the Nile has now become one of the best natural waterways in the world. Navigation is possible all through the year from Juba to Khartoum, up the Bahr-el-Ghazal to Meshra-el-Rek, from Kereima to Kerma

on the Dongola reach, and from Wadi Halfa to Shellal. From Khartoum to Juba the chief obstacles to navigation have been overcome. A navigable channel passing through Abu Zeid ford has been marked by buoys ; rocks near Jebelein have been removed ; the sandbanks have been buoyed ; and through the Sudd region a way has been cut, which is not difficult to keep open and is fairly easily navigated. In addition, wood stations for the steamers have been established by the Government at convenient points. Between Khartoum and Juba the sailings are fortnightly, and the time taken is usually fourteen days upstream and a few days less going in the other direction. From Juba there is now a road connection with the Belgian Congo and Uganda. Between Khartoum and Meshra-er-Rek the service is monthly, and the time taken for the voyage up-stream is eleven days. During the wet season (From July to September) the road to Wau, capital of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, is impassable ; so steamers ply only as far as the mouth of the Jur, 25 miles from Meshra-er-Rek, where connection is made with a service of smaller steamers which go up the river to Wau. Between Kereima and Kerma weekly steamers run in connection with a branch railway line joining the main line at Abu Hamed ; but, when the Nile is low, the steamers only go as far as Dongola where native sailing craft is available. Between Shellal and Wadi Halfa, there is a service twice a week of good and well-equipped passenger steamers, running in connexion with the Egyptian State Railways, and this is the usual means of communication between Khartoum and Cairo. These steamers run for over 200 miles through Egyptian territory.

All the steamers are flat-bottomed, and some of them only drawing 18 inches of water, and most of them having paddle wheels at the stern. Many of the steamers are accompanied by large steel barges with double decks. These barges are lashed alongside and usually carry native passengers and goods. Sometimes as many as four barges are 'pushed' in the American fashion by the

larger steamers, which also have double-decked barges on either side. This strange mass of river transport all tied together is a clumsy spectacle as it slowly moves along the river, with spray splashing from the paddle-wheel and smoke belching from the steamer's funnel. The chief enemy of the river navigation is the violent type of sandstorm, which rises very suddenly in the region of Khartoum and the south, and is perfectly capable of capsizing steamers on the broad reaches of the river. But these sinister products of nature, which are usually followed by heavy rain, are as a rule confined to the hottest summer months.

While the railways and steamers in the Sudan maintain slow but efficient services, the road system falls far short of that needed for the motor transport which has now superseded camel caravans on the principal trade routes. The roads are little more than tracks passable for light motor transport in fine weather, with bridges built over rivers and ravines. The only tarmac roads in the country outside the chief towns are those from Juba to Aba in the Belgian Congo and to Nimule on the Uganda border. All roads leading to the Ethiopian frontier are mere tracks with no foundation, and in many cases their course is changed from one season to another. In wet weather these routes are impassable, and motor transport is stopped by order of the Government. While on the Italian side tarmac roads are being built towards the frontier posts of Sabderat, Gallabat, Kurmuk, and Gambela, the Sudan Government show no intention of building all-weather roads on their side until the pressure of trade makes this absolutely necessary. A point, however, to bear in mind is that, trade and transit excluded, tarmac roads are essential for the Ethiopian rains and for the development of the country, while this is not so in the case of the Sudan. Also, apart from the fact that the Sudan Government disfavour road competition with their own railways and steamers, certain financial difficulties have to be overcome before trade and transit relations can be regularized between the Sudan and

Italian East Africa. But, as the Italians have every desire to make use of the Sudan transit routes for the greater part of western Ethiopia, possibly the Sudan Government will decide to run their own motor transport to feed their railway and steamer services, or come to some arrangement with private transport contractors.

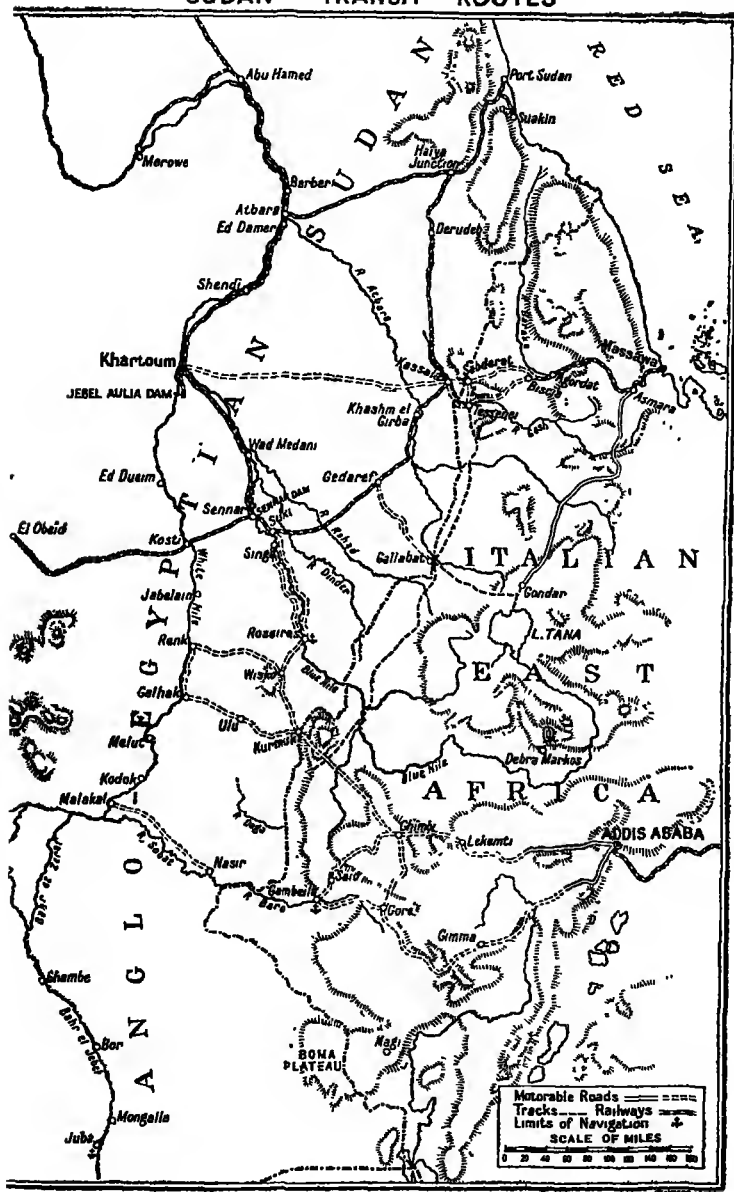
So far, most of the road transport is carried out by owner-drivers, usually Sudanese, who have succeeded in paying the first deposit on the hire purchase of a lorry and the small registration fee required. There are few cases of firms, or even individuals, operating a number of vehicles. Cheap American two-ton trucks are used almost everywhere, as they are found suitable for the tracks already described. But there are at present certain technical difficulties in connexion with the use of this type of motor vehicle in the Sudan. While the Italian heavy lorries with diesel engines can be run economically, the light motor trucks of the Sudan have a heavy petrol consumption of £E.8 a ton. Although experiments have been made with diesel engine lorries, it is doubtful whether they will prove suitable for Sudanese conditions until the roads have a much better foundation than they have at present. In spite of these difficulties, transport lorries are already making their way from Khartoum to Addis Abeba via Kurmuk, Neggio, Ghimbi, and Lekemti. The Sudan is the natural outlet for Western Ethiopia and there are no transit dues as in Egypt, but the currency question is a serious obstacle to all trade and transit arrangements. Some solution of this question must be found in any trade agreement arising out of the Anglo-Italian Agreement.

Reference has already been made to the far-reaching results of civil aviation in this part of Africa, but this is not to say that aeroplanes are likely to supersede ground transport services. Although aeroplanes can carry comparatively small loads for great distances at high speeds, ground transport must continue to carry heavier loads much more slowly but at cheaper rates. The great value of air transport in these vast areas of scattered

habitation is their ability to carry passengers and mails quickly from one centre to another. This not only speeds up everything in the administration and progressive development of the country, but welds all the provinces and districts into a much more compact whole. In the Sudan, government dispatches and business letters used to take several weeks to reach outlying districts, and the visits of government officials and business men to these distant parts were lengthy undertakings. All this meant that it took a long time to get anything done. Now, thanks to civil aviation, even the great distances are covered in a few hours, and Khartoum is in close touch from day to day with everything that happens in all parts of the Sudan. There are flying-boat alighting areas at Wadi Halfa, Khartoum, Malakal, and Nimule; and aerodromes at Kassala, Khartoum, and Geneina, the former on the Italian route to Asmara and the latter on the British route to West Africa. There are also many landing grounds for aircraft scattered throughout the country, which is a great help in the maintenance of public security. It can no longer be said that the more remote parts of the Sudan are shut off from the outside world. With the coming of the aeroplane, these formerly isolated districts will become more and more part of the general fabric of the country and will benefit accordingly.

It may seem rather absurd to apply the term 'agricultural' to a country which is largely composed of desert, but the Sudan does yield a plentiful supply of live stock and a fairly extensive variety of crops, fibres, and other vegetable products. As a great part of the Sudan is a pastoral country, the main occupation of the people is the raising of cattle, sheep, and goats; and consequently there is a certain export of hides and skins. But the most important industry is the cultivation of cotton, which is carried out by irrigation on an extensive scale in the Gezireh, and to a lesser extent in the Gash and Tokar Deltas. The next most important product is gum arabic, which is found in considerable quantities in Kordofan, in the neighbourhood of Gedaref and in the Gezireh.

SUDAN TRANSIT ROUTES



The Sudan is the chief source of the world's supply of this product. As all these districts are near the railway, export is a comparatively simple matter. Among the crops cultivated in many districts are wheat, barley, maize, and dura, while sesame and ground nuts are extensively grown. Other miscellaneous products include small quantities of gold, salt on the Red Sea coast, coffee, tobacco, beeswax, and ivory.

In recent years much has been done by the Government to gain the confidence of the chief negro cattle-owning tribes, in order to carry out measures for controlling the movements of cattle and reducing disease. As a result of this policy the natives have come to welcome the visits of veterinary inspectors, and have already absorbed some knowledge of how to deal with cattle disease themselves. The Egyptian market provides a good opening for trade in live stock, which is now one of the principal exports from the Sudan to Egypt. In the Bayuda desert huge flocks of sheep and goats are owned by the Hassanich and other Bedouin tribes. The Shilluk also are large sheep owners, although they seldom kill for meat. They prefer to use sheep together with cows for the purchase of wives, but in this matrimonial traffic cows are in special demand ! Although most of the sheep in Darfur carry little wool, the Zaghawa tribe have large flocks of a special breed with long and curly hair. In Kordofan also sheep are plentiful among the tribes, especially in the south where there is a small, active breed carrying more meat in proportion to its size than the ordinary Arab breeds of the northern and central Sudan. In the villages, even the poorest Arabs have small flocks of sheep and goats as well as donkeys and a few cattle.

Among the tribes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, as also among some of the Dinkas, agricultural implements are thrown with sheep and goats into the matrimonial traffic. In these parts a wife costs from forty to fifty iron hoes, or from twenty to thirty sheep and goats. The Nuer also own considerable quantities of live-stock, but hitherto they have made little parade of their

possessions through fear of having them stolen by their neighbours on the other side of the Ethiopian frontier. It is quite a common practice among some tribes to pay some of their taxes in cattle, sheep, or goats, and others in money. In the Kassala province some of the tribes have great herds of sheep and horned cattle which they water every other day at the wells, and the Atbai in the Berber district is one of the best grazing grounds in the Sudan for sheep and goats as well as for camels. Also in the neighbourhood of Omdurman, large herds of cattle and sheep wander among the rich grasses covering the mud flats and islands when the river is low. There is little doubt that the live-stock industry is one of increasing importance, not only for the native population but also from the point of view of Government revenue. Its importance will be further increased by the improvement of communications and the opening up of transit routes.

The methods of cultivation, especially in the southern Sudan, are still of the most primitive kind. The chief agricultural implement is the hoe, and the kind in general use is the long-handled push-hoe with a half-moon blade. Seeds are sown in holes dibbled into the soil with a curved and pointed stick, which is long enough to save the native from the fatigue of bending down to his work. A variety of small knives are used for harvesting the dura, which after cutting is carried to a threshing floor in the fields to be beaten out by women or trodden out by cattle. The stalks are kept for fodder during the dry season. Primitive ploughs or harrows are used in some districts, but they are obviously intended for use in a country where time is no object. Although attempts are made to introduce more up-to-date methods of working the soil, there seems to be a strong prejudice in favour of the ancient and queer-looking tools that have stood the test of centuries. The people, however, certainly understand irrigation, and have learnt by heredity exactness in levelling operations, the making of channels, and the control of water on their irrigated patches.

Two water-lifting devices are in general use. One is the ancient bullock *sakia* or Persian wheel, built entirely of wood with an endless chain of earthen pots ; the other is the *shaduf* with a long weighted lever worked by manual labour, and a goat skin hauled up and down by donkey or mule. Iron *sakias*, which can be worked by a single animal and give a double output of water, have failed to become established, owing to lack of mechanical knowledge and suitable materials for repair. Iron bearings for the old wooden *sakias*, giving freer movement and therefore greater output, have fared little better ; for the absence of the groaning noise made by the wooden bearings prevented the owner at a distance from knowing whether the *sakia* was working or not. The amount of water that can be raised to any height by either the *sakia* or the *shaduf* is not great, and the area affected is small. Irrigation by such means is restricted to a comparatively narrow strip of land along the river bank, and the average native holding worked in this way is usually confined to about 10 acres.

From the point of view of irrigation the Sudan may be divided into four zones—the northern, the Gezireh, the southern, and the Red Sea and Kassala zones. The first two are practically dependent upon artificial irrigation, the third relies upon rainfall, and the last depends upon natural inundations. The northern zone comprises Khartoum and the provinces north of it. Here artificial irrigation is carried on along the river banks by means of two systems ; either by canal irrigation (perennial), which necessitates the lifting of water from the river during the whole period of the growth of the crops, or by basin irrigation, where certain blocks of land, having a surface level lower than that reached by the river in its annual rise, receive in one heavy flooding sufficient moisture to mature a grain crop.¹ Where canal irrigation is carried out the date palm is prominent, and most native holdings have a considerable number of trees from which excellent returns are obtained, and beneath which

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

grain, fodder crops and vegetables are grown. Basin irrigation on anything like a large scale is confined to the Dongola province. Here wheat is the principal crop, but some barley and green fodder are also cultivated. The Gezireh zone comprises the great plain between the White and Blue Niles, consisting of alluvial deposit instead of the dry sand so universally encountered in the country north of Khartoum. In making this region productive, nature would appear to have accomplished one-half of man's work for him by levelling millions of acres, which with man's ingenuity and labour has now become white with cotton. The Gezireh, in fact, has proved to be as good an area for cotton growing as any locality within the British Empire, and is the most important enterprise yet undertaken in the Sudan.

The southern zone comprises that portion of the Sudan south of about lat. 12° N., where approximately North African and Saharan conditions give place to a region of plentiful rains, upon which all agricultural efforts depend. As there is much variety in the amount and distribution of the rainfall from year to year, the cultivator has little sense of security, and consequently small encouragement to adopt intensive methods of farming. Nevertheless, owing to the almost universal fertility of the soil, surprisingly rich crops are obtained.

In the Red Sea and Kassala zone irrigation depends upon the overflow of the Baraka and Gash when in flood.¹ The Baraka, rising in the highlands of Eritrea, comes down in July–September as a torrential stream, irrigating, during a normal season, 40,000 acres of cotton-growing lands at Tokar. The area under cultivation, however, depends entirely upon the extent and direction of the overflow, which is variable. In 1912 the area flooded was 44,000 acres, as against 54,000 in 1911, the highest on record. Occasionally the river has broken away to the east, and the flood water has been lost on rough ground far outside the area allotted by the Government for cotton cultivation, with the result that the crop has been a

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

failure. Attempts to divert the flood into certain courses have been fairly successful, and much depends on the scientific control of the Baraka. The native in this district is anxious to use European ploughs and modern methods of cultivation, but it is not difficult to understand his aversion to any expenditure that would be fruitless should the flood water not irrigate the land. The Gash and the River Mareb are usually in flood between 7 July and 15 September, and the conditions in Kassala, as regards the uncertainty of the overflow, are similar to those in Tokar.¹

As the development of the Gezireh for the growing of cotton is a most remarkable achievement constituting the most important economic feature of the Sudan to-day, it is as well to know how these results have been obtained. The appearance of this triangular tract of country is familiar to every traveller in the train south of Khartoum. The dusty monotony of the plain is only occasionally broken by a clump of trees or a village of straw huts, and it would be difficult to imagine an area which looks less promising. The plain contains about five million acres, three million of which are suited for irrigation, so that the 800,000 already irrigated are only a little over one-quarter of the total cultivable area. The change brought about by artificial irrigation can only be appreciated by comparing the cultivated areas with those which are still untouched. While the latter consist of dusty desolation, the former have vast fields of bright green cotton plants stretching as far as the eye can see.

Before the coming of irrigation the staple crop dependent on the rains was dura ; and the Gezireh has always been regarded as the granary of the Sudan. But the rains are precarious both in volume and distribution, and in the past the people were ever haunted by the spectre of famine and starvation. Under these uncertain conditions cultivation was each year carried out to a varying extent, and individual rights to cultivate certain areas gradually

¹ In 1936 there were 43,000 feddans under cotton in the Tokar delta, and 35,550 feddans in the Gash delta.

became established. The cultivators either lived in villages grouped round wells, often at some distance from their land ; or carried on other pursuits elsewhere, except during the short period of rain cultivation when they attended to their crops in the Gezireh. Attention was first called to the possibility of irrigation in this area by Sir William Garstin's report of 1904, as a result of which a Sudan branch of the Egyptian Irrigation Service was set up, and a systematic study of the whole problem was undertaken. But many important things had to be done before a large irrigation scheme could be started.

It was clear that existing native rights could not be properly protected unless a register of ownership was available. This work was begun in 1906. Adequate means of transport were also necessary. This led to the building of a new branch of the railway, which reached Sennar in 1910. Further, it was essential to find out by experiment the prospects of cotton cultivation under artificial irrigation. For this purpose the Government acquired a stretch of land at Tayiba, where in 1911 they erected a pump and canalized about 3,000 acres (later increased to 5,000 acres), for the purpose of determining what crops were most suited to irrigation in the soil and climate of the Gezireh. The growing of long-staple cotton was found to be sufficiently remunerative to justify a much larger outlay of capital with every prospect of a satisfactory return.

The whole area was rented from the owners at ten Egyptian piastres an acre and re-let to the tenants in 30-acre blocks. The management of this area was entrusted by the Sudan Government to the Sudan Plantation Syndicate, which was already interested in a concession for the growing of cotton with pump irrigation at Zeidab in the Berber district, where they had obtained valuable experience in this particular kind of work. At the beginning of this experiment the tenants were charged a fixed rate for the supply of water, and everything was controlled by the Syndicate until such time as the experiments should prove successful. By 1913 success seemed

assured, and it was clear that a larger project could be considered. It therefore became necessary to find some more permanent basis of co-operation between the Government, the Syndicate, and the native cultivators.

It was finally decided to introduce a profit-sharing arrangement, which has since become the basis of the whole Gezireh scheme. The Sudan Government was to be responsible for the financing and running of the pumps, besides having already supplied the capital for the major canalization. The Syndicate then became responsible for the minor canalizations, for the management of the whole enterprise, and for financing the tenants; while the tenants themselves were to supply the labour. The cotton crop was to be divided in the proportion of 35 per cent to the Government, 25 per cent to the Syndicate, and 40 per cent to the tenants; while all other crops were to go to the tenants. The results of this system have been far-reaching; for it has provided the only possible method by which a return could be obtained on the large amount of capital which has ultimately been needed for the Gezireh scheme. Any fixed charge giving a reasonable return would have been heavier than the man with bad crops could stand, and less than the man with good crops could afford to pay; while the amount of the fixed charge would have appeared terrifying to the tenants. As both the Government and the Syndicate are directly interested in the actual results, the profit-sharing system has encouraged careful supervision, and has produced conditions believed to be different from those of any other irrigation system in the world.

Meanwhile the project for the larger scheme had taken shape. It was decided in 1913 that the canalization of about 300,000 acres should be undertaken, of which 100,000 acres should be under cotton; and that a dam should be built at a point near the village of Sennar, so that irrigation by gravity should replace irrigation by means of pumps. In order to finance this undertaking a loan of £3,000,000 was obtained with a guarantee from the British Treasury, and work was begun on the con-

struction of the dam just before the outbreak of war in 1914 but had to be suspended. When the larger schemes had been finally approved, it was found necessary to set up a second experimental station in order to test conditions more fully. It was, therefore, arranged that the Syndicate should erect another pump, and canalize about 6,000 acres at Barakat for use as an experimental station until the arrival of the gravitation water. These two experimental schemes led to the planning of the 300,000-acre scheme, for which an elaborate organization was necessary.

Arrangements had to be made for training the tenants, for supervising the digging of the field channels, and the clearing, levelling and ploughing of the ground; for superintending the sowing and cultivation of crops; and for collecting, sorting, ginning, and marketing the cotton crop. It was also necessary to find large sums of money for expenditure on fixed plant and staff, and for financing advances to the tenants to cover working expenses until payments for cotton sales were received. All this was beyond the resources of the Sudan Government, which had already undertaken the building of the dam and the construction of the main canalization, so the Syndicate was invited to participate in the final scheme.

At the end of the war active steps for further extensions were taken, and the need for more capital (owing to the rise in prices) was met by an increase in the loan guaranteed by the British Treasury from £3,000,000 to £6,000,000. This enabled the work of construction to be re-started, but the British Government had to guarantee a total of £13,000,000 before the scheme was finally completed. At the same time, it was realized that the preliminary schemes at Tayiba and Barakat were not sufficient. If the full area of 300,000 acres, with 100,000 acres under cotton, was to be brought under cultivation as soon as the dam and canalization were finished, it was essential to train in advance as many British inspectors and native cultivators as possible. The Syndicate, therefore, undertook two further large pumping schemes in the Gezireh.

This they did at great expense and with the knowledge that, as soon as the dam and main canalization were finished, the pumps would no longer be required. But their bold policy was fully justified. In July 1925, the Makwar Dam and main canalization were finished, and irrigation was begun in the same month from the reservoir above the dam. The preparations made by the Syndicate had their reward. In the first season they were able to allot tenancies for 240,000 acres, of which 80,000 acres were actually sown with cotton and watered ; while the tenants were further enabled to plant up to 40,000 acres of dura and an equal acreage of lubia. With pump irrigation the maximum area under cotton had been 20,000 acres, and the expansion of this by gravitation water to 80,000 acres in one season was a magnificent achievement, which proved the value of the Syndicate's pioneer work.

Since the opening of the Makwar Dam the canalized area has been increased from 300,000 acres to over a million acres¹ while the area under cotton has been extended from 80,000 acres to 200,000 acres. The preliminary schemes are now incorporated in the main area and, as the water now flows by gravity, pumps are no longer used. In 1937, the total export of ginned cotton from the Sudan represented 59.9 per cent of the total exports and was valued at £E.5,392,511.

The tract known as the Main Gezireh Area has a length of about fifty-two miles from north to south and a breadth averaging about twelve miles from east to west. The plain has a downward slope to the north in the same direction as the Blue Nile flow, and a gentle slope westward to the White Nile, so that the alignment of the irrigation canals is easy and uniform. This facilitates the division of the land into regular and compact blocks well suited for supervision and administration. From the Makwar Dam the main Gezireh Canal runs for 35 miles parallel to the Blue Nile, and then divides into a system of smaller canals

¹ Of this total about 800,000 acres are owned by natives of the country, and about 200,000 acres by the Government.

irrigating the area between the Blue and White Niles. In order to allow for the rotation of crops one section is planted with cotton each year, another is sown with a vegetable or grain crop, and the remainder lies fallow. The following year the type of cultivation on each section is changed. The Makwar Dam is nearly two miles long, and it takes over an hour to walk across it and back again. The reservoir above the dam is very different from the English idea of a reservoir. It will eventually become a lake 50 miles long, with a capacity of 140,000,000,000 gallons of water, which is enough to supply greater London for nearly two years. The canalized area is about the size of Hampshire; the area actually under cotton is about the size of Middlesex.

While cotton is still grown in certain parts of the Sudan by rain cultivation, the results of the Gezireh scheme show what can be done to develop a country of this kind provided that water is available. With the improvement of communications, there seems no reason why further development schemes should not be launched to increase the agricultural output of the Sudan, provided that the water used does not reduce that available for cultivation in Egypt. A great work has already been achieved in harnessing the waters of the Nile, but there are possibilities yet to be exploited. For several hundred miles the White Nile flows through the Sudd region, where a vast volume of water is lost by evaporation. It has, therefore, been proposed to build a dam at Lake Albert¹ together with a canal through the Sudd. The dam and the canal would co-operate, the former hoarding a great quantity of water in Lake Albert for release when required in the Sudan and Egypt, the latter preventing the water from being absorbed by the swamps of the Sudd region. There is also the question of constructing the Lake Tana Dam in Ethiopia which requires some explanation.

As far back as 1902, the Egyptian Government were authorized by the Emperor Menelik to send an expedition 'to visit and collect all possible information concerning

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

Lake Tana, with a view to deciding whether it could be effectively utilized as a reservoir for the Nile, should such a proposal ever come within the range of practical politics.¹ Later, in 1920, it was arranged that the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works should send another mission to make further studies of the lake. The outstanding results of the 1920 mission were definitely to confirm the conclusions reached by the expedition eighteen years earlier. It was found that in normal circumstances Lake Tana makes its greatest contribution to the waters of the Blue Nile at the time of year when the river in Egypt and the Sudan is amply supplied from other sources, and produces the least volume of water during the season when the main river was low. If the outflow from the lake were controlled by a regulator, the water which now adds to the surplus in the main river (when there is already more than enough) could be kept in the lake, and released during the period when the Nile is low and water is most needed in the Sudan and Egypt.

In average years the total discharge of water from Lake Tana is about 3,500 million cubic metres, and this is the volume that could be stored for use when the Nile is low. In normal years the discharge of water varies according to the season of the year from almost nothing to a maximum of about 350 cubic metres per second. But the discharge from the lake at the highest flood-time does not exceed one-fiftieth part of the total volume of water entering Egypt, and water control at Lake Tana can make no appreciable difference either to the height of the flood or to the proportion of silt passing through Assuan. It is also estimated that, during the period when the proposed Lake Tana reservoir was discharging, 90 per cent of Tana water would reach Roseires, 85 per cent would reach Makwar, and 68 per cent would reach Assuan. If the whole 3,500 million cubic metres from Lake Tana reached Assuan, the additional quantity reaching that point from this source would be about 2,400 million cubic

¹ *Vide* Report of the Mission to Lake Tana by Grabham and Black. Cairo, 1926.

metres. If, on the other hand, this water were used in the Gezireh district of the Sudan, the Lake Tana supply would amount to a volume of about 3,000 million cubic metres. A comparison of these figures shows the advantage of using this water for the irrigation of the Gezireh where it is most needed for extending the cultivable area. With the reservoir discharging at the rate of 350 cubic metres per second, the water would take about eight days to reach Makwar (for the Gezireh) and about thirty-two days to reach Assuan (for Egypt).

Naturally, Egypt's chief interest in Ethiopia is the question of water supply, and the possibility of building a dam at Lake Tana. In the Anglo-Italian Agreement definite assurances are given that British rights over the waters of Lake Tana and the Blue Nile will be respected, but the procedure to be followed with regard to the dam still remains to be decided. In recent years there has been divergence of views as to the advisability of building this dam, but in 1938 the Ministry of Public Works in Egypt seemed to favour the project. There appear to be no technical difficulties, and the cost has been estimated at about £E.1,000,000. Curiously enough, the only difficulties envisaged are of a religious nature ; for the raising of the level of the lake would flood certain Ethiopian churches and monasteries in the neighbourhood. The Egyptian authorities have also stated quite definitely that any power station which the Italians might erect for generating electricity would not interfere in any way either with the proposed dam or with the water needed for irrigation in Egypt or the Sudan. The original arrangement with the previous Government of Ethiopia was that the contract for building the dam should be given to the White Engineering Company of America ; but it is difficult to imagine the Italians foregoing the opportunity of carrying out the work themselves and paying for the undertaking in their own currency.¹ In these circumstances it is possible that an arrangement might be made whereby the

¹ In the negotiations with the previous Ethiopian Government the sum of £E.50,000 per annum was mentioned.

Italians would sell the water to Egypt and the Sudan in exchange for sterling. Indeed, this might be one way of helping to solve the currency difficulty to which I will refer later on.

With the exception of the town lighting of the most important centres, and certain Government electrical installations, there is practically no electrical power in the Sudan in spite of the water supply available. Yet the country possesses many possible sources of water power, which may play an important part in future development. There are five cataracts between Khartoum and Wadi Halfa ; the falls and rapids on the rivers flowing into the Sudan from the Ethiopian highlands ; the falls and rapids on the Sueh and Wau rivers in the Bahr-el-Ghazal ; and the Fola and Bedden rapids of the Upper Nile between Nimule and Rejaf. As it is the intention of the Italians to produce electricity from the Ethiopian lakes and such rivers as the Blue Nile, the Omo, and the Awash, the Sudan cannot afford to be behindhand in such an important part of general development. So far, manufactures in the Sudan are almost negligible, being chiefly confined to local needs ; but with the development of trade and transit with Egypt in the north, and with Italian East Africa in the east, water power may enable the gradual growth of industries to meet the needs of changing conditions.

When the term ' forest ' is used in connection with the Sudan, it must not be imagined that this refers to anything approaching the evergreen timber forests of Equatorial Africa, although there are some strips of ' gallery ' forest in some of the valleys bordering on the Ethiopian highlands in the east and the Nile-Congo watershed in the south. In most parts what is often spoken of as ' forest ' is really bush in which the trees are larger and more numerous than elsewhere, as is the case along the banks of the White Nile and in the Bahr-el-Ghazal. The nearest approach to a timber supply is probably in the western Bahr-el-Ghazal region, but generally speaking the bush vegetation of the Sudan is

a half-way stage between forest and desert. As the traveller goes south from Khartoum, he notices that acacia thorn trees begin to take the place of camel thorn and low desert scrub, increasing in number and size until the region of about latitude 10° N. is reached. These small trees cover immense areas of country in Darfur, Kordofan, and in the regions of Sennar and Kassala, as well as in the direction of the Red Sea, and in certain parts of the Nile Valley. All along the Upper and White Niles the need of wood fuel for the river steamers has made it necessary to cut down a great deal of the bush near the river banks, but very little of this wood could be used for any other purpose. In some cases there are long stretches between the wood-fuelling stations, where the steamers have to carry large stores of firewood for distances up to 400 miles. In the Sudd region there is no fuel of any kind, and there have been cases when steamers have been imprisoned in the swamps for a long time¹ and their deck fittings have had to be burnt in order to get out before running short of food supplies. While there is a large supply of African mahogany and other timber trees in the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, the cost of transport to the river would be so great as to make its export impossible from a commercial point of view. In the upper reaches of the Blue Nile, however, there is a good prospect of an important timber trade with the forests of Western Ethiopia, and of the Sudan deriving considerable benefit from the working of this timber and its export through Port Sudan.²

Although the Sudan contains a variety of minerals such as copper, gypsum, iron, limestone, and marble, the only minerals exported are gold to the value of £E.59,255 in 1937, and salt to the value of £E.46,368 in the same year. Although at one time gold used to be mined throughout that part of the Sudan north of Berber by the ancient Egyptians and the Arabs, the workings are now chiefly confined to those at Gabait and other places in the Red Sea hills. Salt is obtained by evaporation at Port

¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

² *Vide* Chapter XI.

Sudan, as is the case at nearly all the ports on the western side of the Red Sea.

The principal outlets for Sudan trade and transit have hitherto been by ship from Port Sudan ; by Nile steamer from Wadi Halfa ; and by caravan routes via the frontier posts of Ethiopia and the Belgian Congo. The two principal buyers of Sudanese produce are Great Britain and British India, and in both these cases Port Sudan is used almost exclusively. In the case of Egypt, the Sudan's third best customer, about two-thirds of the export trade passes through Port Sudan and a third through Wadi Halfa. Hitherto the trade and transit through the frontier posts have been confined to a small but long-established traffic between the Sudan and what is now Italian East Africa by the transit routes of Kassala, Gallabat, Kurmuk, and Gambela,¹ with a little coming and going over the frontier of the Belgian Congo. While the Sudan imports from Egypt a miscellaneous collection of goods, valued in 1937 at £E.1,418,228, her exports to Egypt are almost entirely composed of live-stock and agricultural products valued at £E.691,410. Egypt is the principal single consumer of Sudan produce other than cotton, cotton seed, gum, and gold, none of which except a small quantity of gum are imported into Egypt from the Sudan. The great change which is about to take place in the economic conditions of the Sudan as a result of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, affects the four transit routes already mentioned and the outlet at Port Sudan. Although trade between the Sudan and Italian East Africa will undoubtedly increase, the chief value of the new situation lies in the revenue to be derived from transit as soon as these four routes are fit to carry modern transport. Already in 1937 the Sudan trade with Ethiopia alone showed an increase of £E.229,295 in value over 1936.

Up to the present conditions on these frontier routes have changed little since the days before the Italo-Ethiopian War although heavy traffic developed early

¹ See map on p. 139.

in 1938 on the road from Sennar to the Ethiopian frontier on account of goods ordered by the Italian authorities from local firms. In the ordinary way the Sudan imports coffee, wax, hides and skins, and sells in return salt, cotton goods, artificial silk, linen, and a collection of odds and ends. Many of the textiles mentioned come from Japan through the market of Omdurman, and are to be seen displayed in most of the markets of Western Ethiopia. But in 1938 I found that the great difficulty experienced by Sudan traders was that they received payment in Italian lire which they could not take out of Italian East Africa, and they could not even have their credits transferred to Italy. Hence, Khartoum firms had frozen credits in Massawa and Addis Abeba, and were reluctant to continue business on these lines. The result was that a certain amount of private barter trade was carried on, and lire were being smuggled out of the country and exchanged at Alexandria at the rate of 15s. per 100 lire. Yet there was in both countries a wish to exchange goods and services. While Italian companies in Western Ethiopia had been instructed to sell to the Sudan rather than locally or in Italy, the Sudan authorities had reduced the freights from Gambela to Port Sudan through fear of losing the transit trade. It cost £E.6 a ton to transport coffee from Gambela to Port Sudan, which was 10s. less than the freight to Khartoum. On the Italian side there was a great need of sterling currency, and the authorities were trying to devise ways of overcoming this obstacle.

One heard a great deal about the possibilities of the Ethiopian coffee crop as a means of exchange for Sudan goods and transit; but inquiries in the Sudan made it fairly evident that there was little chance of increasing the coffee purchases. There is now a tendency on the part of the Sudanese to drink tea instead of coffee owing to the fact that it is easier to prepare. In 1936 the coffee imports amounted to £E.273,569 and the tea imports to £E.246,038; in 1937 the coffee imports had decreased to £E.216,443, and the tea imports had increased to

£E.353.943. Although the extensive resources of high-class coffee in Ethiopia may be of considerable value to the Italians in world markets in course of time, it is difficult to see how this is going to help them at present in their economic relations with the Sudan. But more will be said about this question of currency later on.¹

As the transit routes between the Sudan and Italian East Africa will be described in detail from the Italian side,² it is sufficient to say here that they all connect with the Nile navigation or Sudan railways, and that in all cases the outlet is through Port Sudan. While on the Italian side tarmac roads for heavy motor traffic are steadily pushing their way in the direction of the Sudan frontier posts, the road communications on the Sudan side call for great improvement to meet the development on twentieth-century lines of Italy's New Empire. From the north and east, and possibly also from the south, the pressure of development will soon increase the importance of the Sudan.

With this will come opportunities of a greater prosperity. But nothing will result from sitting and waiting for things to happen or in saying that there is insufficient money to grasp opportunities. The Sudan should show a readiness to meet the new situation by deciding to undertake such works as would help to set trade and transit in motion without incurring too heavy expenditure at the outset. Further works could then depend on circumstances. The policy adopted might well be one of compromise between the British method of not building good roads till trade makes them absolutely essential and the Italian system of building roads to create trade.

Although the Sudan railways are only single line, this should be sufficient until the transit with Italian East Africa becomes much heavier than it is likely to do in the immediate future; and the present facilities at Port Sudan are more than sufficient to meet the earlier stages of this traffic. Port Sudan is a most up-to-date port with an excellent anchorage providing ample room for several

¹ *Vide* Chapter IX.

² *Vide* Chapter XII.

vessels to moor. There are five berths fitted with the most modern equipment ; the railway runs alongside the quays ; and there is every facility for obtaining coal, water, and oil. There is also a dockyard for repairs, a wireless station and a first-class hotel—in fact everything needed to make a port of this size thoroughly efficient. Moreover, there is plenty of scope for enlarging the port to deal with increased traffic. In 1937, the number of vessels entering Port Sudan, (including ships of war but not native craft) was 1,174, with a total net registered tonnage of 3,896,216 tons.

This brings to an end my description of the countries dependent on the Nile, which show definite signs of co-operating more with one another. These signs come as a result of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and its provisions with regard to the Sudan, but they are also due to the much greater possibilities of co-operation brought about by modern aviation and motor transport. It should, however, be borne in mind that closer relations between Egypt and the Sudan can achieve comparatively little as an end in themselves. It is when Egyptian-Sudanese co-operation forms a factor in the larger co-operation between the countries of the Nile and Italian East Africa, depending to a considerable extent on the Red Sea, that it assumes its full significance.

The opening up of trade and transit between the Sudan and Italian East Africa will not only bring additional wealth to the Sudan, but should create an awakening to the possibilities of great internal development and of making more use of the country's natural resources. A constant flow of passengers and goods over the frontier cannot but stimulate a desire to profit by building up local industries and creating new services. Moreover, when a movement of this kind begins there is no saying where it will end, especially in a country forming a natural transit area for the whole of North-East Africa. With an enterprising and energetic nation across the frontier, there will be a constant forward movement in

which the Sudan must play a prominent part. The momentum of this will make it imperative for those countries intimately concerned to keep pace with its economic demands. It may therefore be anticipated that economic pressure from Egypt, and to a greater extent from Italian East Africa, will bring about an active policy in the Sudan to make the most of the new situation for the benefit of British, Egyptians, and Sudanese alike. It would, however, be in the best interests of the Sudan to move forward of her own accord and anticipate to some extent the needs of the future. This would not only hasten development and the profit to be derived from transit, but would greatly strengthen the spirit of friendly co-operation by giving material proof that our readiness to work with the Italians is not merely confined to words.

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CHAPTER VIII

ITALY'S NEW EMPIRE

NEXT door to the Sudan is one of the most astonishing regions in the world from many points of view—the mountains, valleys, plateaux, and deserts of Ethiopia. Before the Italo-Ethiopian War little was known of what went on in the ancient and primitive Empire of the Amharas, who ruled over a miscellaneous mass of peoples differing widely in race, religion, language, and customs. Occasionally one or two travellers penetrated as far as Addis Abeba, but few were prepared to overcome the obstacles of travelling in the interior. Fortunately those few who did make journeys into the more remote parts made use of their experiences to inform others, and some interesting books were written describing conditions of life in this land of semi-cultured savages. But conditions were such that it was practically impossible for any one European to have a general knowledge of such a wide variety of country and people in an area equal to that of France and Germany together. When war broke out in 1935, and the Italians advanced into Ethiopia from their neighbouring colonies of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, the spread of knowledge about the country was seriously distorted owing to the conflict of political views in Europe. While in some quarters Ethiopia was described as a land of vast hidden wealth glittering with gold and sparkling with precious stones, in others a dismal picture was drawn of a collection of mountains and deserts quite unfit for settlement by Europeans. Needless to say, neither of these descriptions even approached the neighbourhood of the truth.

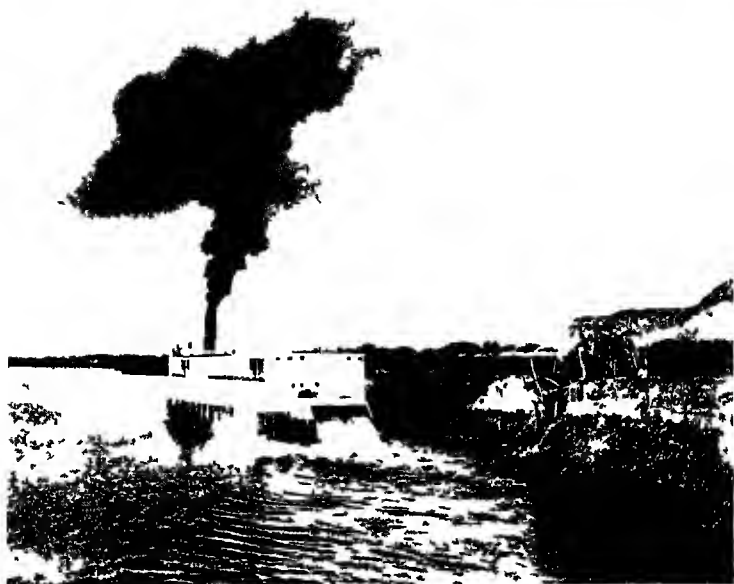
If Ethiopia itself is a huge mixture in almost every sense of the term, its addition to the two previous Italian colonies has created a greater mixture than ever under the name of Italian East Africa. It is, therefore, quite impossible to generalize about any aspect of conditions prevailing in this region, except with regard to the European innovations introduced by the Italians ; and even these have had to be adapted to suit the widely differing needs of localities separated by immense distances. The question : ' What is Ethiopia like ? ' is just as unanswerable as a similar question about Europe or Asia. Ethiopia is really a continent in compact form. While Eritrea is a small edition of Ethiopia, Italian Somaliland has definite characteristics.

Although the north of Ethiopia is mountainous, the mountains are arranged in masses between which there are extensive plains fit for cultivation, and the same applies to the Gojjam in the neighbourhood of Lake Tana. Between the high mountains and the Red Sea is the desert of the Danakil, which is unfit for European habitation. But on the plateaux further south extensive cultivation can be carried out, and the climate is suitable for Europeans except in the highest altitudes. In the district of Harar conditions are ideal both for cultivation and for European settlement, and the same applies to an even greater extent throughout the regions of the south and south-west, stretching almost as far as the frontier of the Sudan in the west and the frontier of Kenya in the south. This region of great agricultural wealth consists of a series of plateaux of different altitudes, between the high plateau of Shoa and the low-lying districts of the Nile valley. The country is well wooded, well watered, and very fertile ; and a large variety of crops, vegetables, and fruits can be grown at the different altitudes. There is also a varied assortment of green pasturage for sheep and cattle, and there are valuable timber resources throughout this area. Lastly, there is the desert of the Ogaden situated between Harar and Italian Somaliland. This is a more or less flat area of low scrub so far devoid of cultiva-

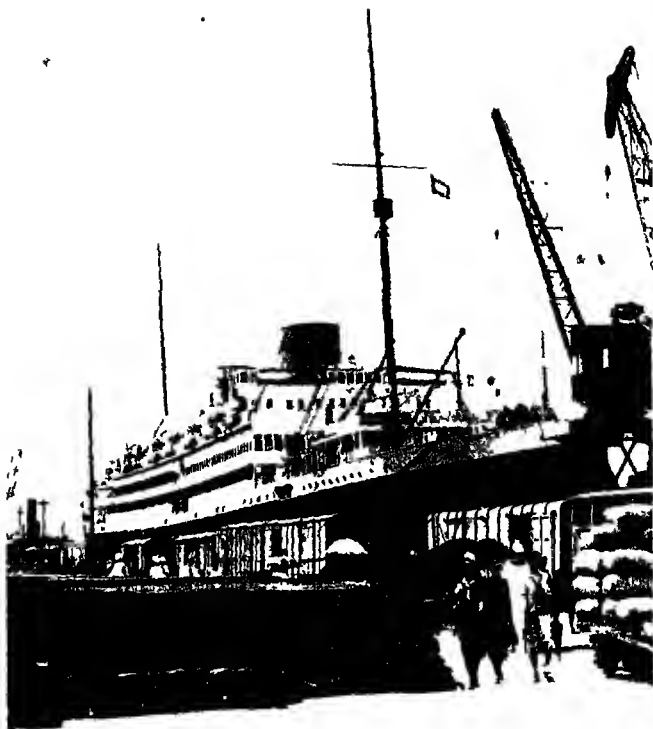


Photo - Maur M. J. Gullus

AMIRAL ANGLO EGYPTIAN SUDAN
GOVERNORS BUNGALOW



SUDAN GOVERNMENT SILAMIR



PORT SUDAN, RMSP COMPANY'S "ASTURIAS"



tion ; but it is possible that irrigation crops may be gradually introduced by making use of the upper reaches of the Webi Shebeli and Juba rivers.

Whereas the peoples of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland are more homogeneous, those of Ethiopia have very little relationship with one another. Under the previous regime the Ethiopian Empire was under the domination of the Amharas, a Christian people who only formed one-third of the population. The remaining two-thirds were composed of the people of various kingdoms, sultanates, and tribes which were conquered and brought within the Ethiopian Empire about forty years ago.¹ Hardly any of these peoples have anything in common with the Amharas, or indeed with one another. While some of the Gallas are Christian and others Moslem, a great many of these conquered peoples are pagans. The Hararis are Moslems, while the Falashas are Jewish in religion but not in race. The people of the high plateaux have hitherto had little coming and going with those of the low-lying regions, except for the purposes of slave-raiding, when the people of the Amhara highlands returned with their captives as rapidly as possible. In the feudal system which prevailed each man owed his allegiance to his chief, and there it ended. Some of the chiefs were loyal to the Emperor and some were not. It depended on their material interests at the time. There were always some important chiefs who had claims to the throne, and for this reason among others rebellions in Ethiopia were of almost annual occurrence. It was, therefore, a profound mistake to regard the peoples of this country as a nation. It was merely a system of mixed patriotisms as uncertain in their loyalty to the Emperor as in their friendship for one another. Even the Amharas were as often as not divided among themselves, and the most important task confronting successive emperors was that of finding means of keeping themselves upon the throne.

It was only with the coming of the Italians that this feudal system was abolished, and all the peoples of

¹ Vide *Ethiopian Realities*, page 38 *et seq.*

Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland became unified in their allegiance to one monarch. Slavery was abolished with a stroke of the pen, and the need of paid labour for development projects immediately provided something to take its place. Now there is complete equality between those who used to rule and those who were subjected to oppression and servitude. Both have an equal opportunity to be educated and to improve their standard of life, as a result of the introduction of European civilization. Yet the different races vary in their backwardness, some being capable of further advancement than others, while there are some who are scarcely capable of any advancement at all. But the point is that no man in Ethiopia to-day has the right to 'lord it' over another on account of the race to which he belongs. The respective religions of the peoples are regarded on the same basis of equality, and radical changes in the native ways of life have been confined to conditions conflicting with the interests of peace and good government. Such traditions and customs as have worked well for centuries are preserved and turned to the best use, but all the barbaric practices, feudal exactions, and time-honoured tyrannies of the previous regime have disappeared. In bringing about the change from a feudal system to a modern colonial administration, the Italians are faced with a task as difficult as it is complicated ; but there is no longer any doubt that with a sound policy and careful administration their new Empire will fulfil the requirements for which they undertook their hazardous enterprise.

There are four main reasons why Italy has gone to Ethiopia : a strong and natural desire for a basis of equality with the other great colonial Powers ; a pressing need of raw materials and foodstuffs to replace what she has had to purchase from abroad ; the necessity of finding territory suitable for European settlement to absorb her surplus population ; and a liquidation of the danger to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland caused by the hostile attitude of the previous regime in Ethiopia. Now that she has occupied the country and set up a European

administration, Italy's policy may be summarized as follows :

(a) The exercise of her full sovereignty, without limitations, over the whole territory and its inhabitants ; a policy of collaboration with the native populations, but with a complete social separation between white and black.

(b) To introduce and spread civilization among the natives of the Empire ; and to co-operate politically and economically with other countries irrespective of distance.

(c) To reach in Italian East Africa a standard of self-sufficiency that will guarantee the economic tranquillity necessary for the development of the various regions ; and to maintain a price level conducive to the free exchange of goods, and to contribute towards this by avoiding heavy transport costs and making use of local raw materials.

(d) To stimulate trade with Italy and with world markets in general.

(e) The application of the principles of the corporative State to the whole economic and social structure of the Empire, so as to exclude any form of profiteering, or of placing the interests of the individual before those of the community in general.

For the work of colonization under modern conditions, Italy has two important advantages in her favour. First, she is in a position to benefit from the successes and failures of other Powers ; and secondly, she can undertake her task as a nation so organized that each individual endeavour plays its allotted part in the general fabric of colonial construction. The work of development is being carried out as if by one huge commercial concern, which draws up careful plans and estimates before putting the work in hand, thereby reducing failures and waste to a minimum and making the best use of each individual asset for the benefit of the whole undertaking. Individual enterprise is by no means excluded, but the system provides a safeguard against ventures without sufficient prospect of success. This new twentieth-century method of colonization, made possible by modern inventions, is in marked con-

trast to the old system on which the British Empire was founded. In those early days men of courage and enterprise in Britain took tremendous risks in far-off lands. They went off into 'the blue' and staked everything on their own confidence and ability to 'make good.' Of these pioneers, who were in fact the founders of the British Empire, only a small percentage crowned their efforts with success, but their names go down to history. The majority either failed completely in their efforts or merely succeeded in making a living in some remote country instead of in England. They have never been heard of since they left the shores of England, and a large number lost their lives in their desperate endeavours. Under conditions existing at that time this was the only possible method of colonization ; and each individual had to work out his own projects, as little or no previous experience was available.

To-day the position is entirely different. Modern communications by ship, rail, road, and air, together with the use of the telegraph, telephone, and wireless, have completely revolutionized the conditions under which colonization can be carried out. It is now possible to make full use of the successes and failures of others, and to draw up colonization plans after the carrying out of expert investigation. By this means the undertaking as a whole can be directed by a central authority, and the individual colonists fit into their places in the general scheme with their prospects of success practically guaranteed up to a certain point. If vast fortunes are excluded from this new system, dismal failures are also reduced to a minimum. The object of the system as far as the individual colonists are concerned is to provide a means of livelihood sufficiently profitable to ensure contentment, but from the Italian point of view this is only an individual contribution to the welfare of the State as a whole.

The form of government which the Italians have introduced to supersede the feudal system is a centralized administration under the Viceroy of Ethiopia and Governor-General of Italian East Africa, who is respon-

sible to the Minister for Italian Africa in Rome. For purposes of administration the Empire is divided up into six States—Eritrea, Amhara, Harar, Galla Sidama, Somalia, and the district of Addis Abeba. Each of these States has a Governor, and is divided into districts and sub-districts under Commissioners and Residents respectively. While most of the higher administrative posts are held by military officers, the number of civil officials in the more junior ranks of the civil service is increasing. But the civil service as a whole is still in a transition stage, and constitutes one of the most important and most difficult problems which the Italians have to solve.

Before the Italo-Ethiopian War, the Italian Colonial Service was only sufficient to meet the needs of parts of Libya, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland, in all of which army officers played a considerable part in the work of administration. With the occupation of Ethiopia, Italy was faced with the difficult task of building up a large colonial civil service out of such personnel as was actually available at the time. All that could be done was to make the best use of a large number of men with little or no colonial experience, under the guidance of a comparatively small number of regular colonial officials. In such circumstances it is not surprising that some serious mistakes were made causing trouble in some parts of the country. But, considering the work which these men had to do in a country of which they had little or no knowledge, it is remarkable how little serious trouble has resulted from their first experiments.

In order to remedy the deficiency in trained personnel, steps have been taken in Rome to set up special training colleges for young Italians considered suitable in education and temperament for colonial administrative work. Those who qualify, it is understood, will then have first-hand experience under instruction in Africa before being appointed to posts in the colonial service. While the regular civil officials and the army officers employed in administrative work are an exceedingly fine body of men with wide experience, plenty of common sense and human

understanding, the novices have plenty of enthusiasm and determination to learn everything they can about the country and the people under their control. They work prodigiously hard, and so far there seems to be no time for recreation ; but, as the system develops and becomes settled down, the recreations so necessary to their welfare and working capacity will no doubt be gradually introduced.

In a system of administration so centralized owing to the inexperience of so many of its members, bureaucracy cannot but clog the wheels of the machine. Yet it is difficult to see how this can be avoided, as it would be unwise to give a comparatively free hand to junior officials until they have acquired sufficient knowledge and experience to act wisely on their own initiative. At the same time, the Italians will make a mistake if they do not train their junior officials to shoulder as much responsibility as they possibly can, and gradually reduce the decisions which have to be referred to higher authorities. It is not only in the junior grades of the civil service that officials are denied full responsibility ; for even the Viceroy has to refer a great many questions to Rome. Indeed, the impression gained during my last visit to Italian East Africa, in the spring of 1938, was that most decisions came in the form of instructions from the Minister of Italian Africa.

Considering the short time that has passed since the Italian occupation of the country, public security is remarkably good. In 1937 the armed forces consisted of 25,000 metropolitan troops, 43,000 native troops, 300 aeroplanes, and 600 pilots. Italian administration prevails in all regions, and there is no organized opposition of any kind. Yet there are localities where there has been trouble, and it is possible that trouble still exists in some of these districts, if it has not moved elsewhere. For centuries Ethiopia has never been without disturbance of some kind, and it is too much to expect that a huge African region of this nature should suddenly become perfectly peaceful. A glance round the parts of the British

Empire which are populated by native races is sufficient to show that absolute tranquillity is extremely difficult to preserve among peoples to whom fighting is a natural instinct. Local disturbances in certain parts of Ethiopia have been of two kinds : (a) brigandage with plunder as its object, which has received an impetus from the support of a number of minor chiefs who have not submitted to the Italians and still possess arms and ammunition ; and (b) tribal resistance to certain local Italian administrators whose youth and inexperience have led them to make mistakes, causing sharp reaction among the native population. It is important to appreciate the nature and significance of these two distinct forms of lawlessness.

In the first case, the trouble has been chiefly confined to localities in Amhara (the land of the former ruling race) and to a remote region in the extreme south-west. Minor chiefs, deprived of their feudal rights to extort money and produce from the people, resorted to brigandage. They looted the villages, compelled people to follow them, and with the arms and ammunition at their disposal attacked the Italian supply depots. Trouble of this kind is purely local and sporadic, and its sole object is personal gain. It now seems clear that the reason for the exceptionally peaceful conditions during my visit to Italian East Africa in 1937¹ is that at that time the native inhabitants had not yet recovered from the war, and many had not yet returned to their districts and villages. Moreover, the chiefs in question had not yet realized that the feudal system had come to a sudden end. A feudal system, bad though it may be in itself, cannot be overturned without causing upheaval and disturbance for some considerable time. The chief difficulty in suppressing this form of lawlessness is that the perpetrators are in reality brigands, who become peaceful cultivators of the land at the first warning of approaching soldiers or police. Those who have served recently in Palestine know the difficulty of rounding up these kind of people.

In the second case, the trouble was confined to the

¹ Vide *The New Abyssinia*, p. 57 *et seq.*

Gojjam, an Amharic region south of Lake Tana which had long been hostile to the ex-Negus, and whose inhabitants submitted peacefully to the Italians. Unfortunately, serious mistakes were made by certain Italian officials, who did not fully realize the nature of their responsibilities and the many pitfalls which confront the perhaps over-zealous native administrator. The result was a local revolt which needed military force to suppress it. This, however, is now a matter of past history, and is unlikely to recur owing to the careful plans which have been made for the training of colonial officials. Referring to the somewhat disturbed situation in the spring of 1938, H.R.H. the Duke of Aosta described Ethiopia "as now suffering from the immediate reaction of a strong inoculation. When this passes off," he said, "convalescence from an age-long malady will become apparent."

The Duke of Aosta was appointed as Viceroy in succession to Marshal Graziani in November 1937, and in some ways this has marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of the administration. It was a definite sign that the Italians were sufficiently satisfied with the peaceful state of the country generally to replace a military commander by a member of the Royal House of Savoy. While the Duke of Aosta is a distinguished officer of the Italian Air Force, his qualities as an administrator are of a different type from those of his predecessor.

Marshal Graziani is a man with great strength of character and determination, who ruled the new Empire with a stern hand but was highly respected by Italians and natives alike. His driving power permeated throughout the whole administration, and during the first phase of pacification was invaluable. Together with this side of his character goes a charming and chivalrous personality, with a strong sense of loyalty to those who serve him well. If he is brusque at times, he is full of sympathy and understanding when occasion demands. His farewell to Ras Imru, when this distinguished Ethiopian chieftain was sent off to Italy, was an example of the high respect in which Graziani regarded an enemy commander who had

fought well against him. Yet a few days later the Viceroy was the victim of an assassination plot planned by some of the very people whom he had liberated at Ras Imru's request. The serious wounds which he received on this occasion so much affected his health that it was difficult for him to continue his arduous labours. It was also felt in Italy that the time had come to introduce the beginnings of a civil administration with a policy of trying to ingratiate the more important Ethiopian chiefs, who still had considerable influence with their respective followers.

The appointment was therefore given to H.R.H. the Duke of Aosta, who has a wide African experience and a personality admirably suited to a policy of ingratiation and progressive development. In this work he had the good fortune to have as deputy Viceroy Signor Enrico Cerulli, a regular colonial official with an almost encyclopædic knowledge of the whole of North-East Africa. Although serious illness marred the early days of his work in Africa, the Duke of Aosta has taken energetic steps to bring about a closer relationship with Ethiopian chiefs. Once a year the more important chiefs are invited to go to Addis Abeba as the Viceroy's guests for the purpose of exchanging views on questions affecting their particular parts of the country. In this and in many other ways the chiefs are beginning to feel that they can play an important part in the new regime, and that their own efforts can do much to uphold their prestige. In plans for the development of the country, for the improvement of the life of the people, and for the friendly relations with neighbouring territories, the Duke takes a supreme interest. This is no academic interest based on theory, but a most serious practical policy of making the best use of Italy's conquered territories for the benefit of both Italians and natives, and to the mutual advantage of the Italians in Africa and their neighbours across the frontiers.

Under the heading of development and material construction, road-building still takes first place, although the pressure of work has been somewhat slowed down and less money is being spent in this direction. The vital com-

munications involving the heaviest expenditure of money and man-power are now practically completed.¹ The main arterial road from Addis Abeba to Asmara and on to the port of Massawa has now a first-class tarmac surface all the way, the mountain difficulties near the Termaber Pass having been overcome by means of a tunnel. This is the principal trade route of Ethiopia, and most of the traffic of the Jibuti railway has been diverted to this channel, thereby accounting for a serious drop in the railway traffic returns. The road from Dessié through the Danakil Desert to the port under construction at Assab is now completed; and that from Gondar through the Semien Mountains to Asmara is finished, so that the capital of Amhara is now easily accessible from Massawa.

While the roads to the south and to Somaliland are of secondary importance and are gradually extending, those from Addis Abeba to the west and south-west are receiving close attention. These are the future trade routes to the Sudan frontier, and are the roads with which this book is chiefly concerned. The roads under construction to Lekemti and Gimma will eventually be extended respectively to Gambela (for the Baro steamers), and to Kurmuk (connected by Sudan track with Er Renk on the White Nile and Roseires on the Blue Nile). These routes pass through most fertile regions, which are already showing signs of agricultural industries and are rich in timber. In the air the passenger and mail aeroplanes of the Ala Littoria maintain a daily service between Addis Abeba, Dire-dawa, and Jibuti and twice-weekly services between Asmara, Assab, and Jibuti, and between Asmara, Dire-dawa, and Mogadishu.

In road-building, in the aviation services, and in constructional and other work, natives are employed in many capacities. They are paid accordingly and are insured against accident and illness. But, generally speaking, the money reward for labour holds out little inducement to work. The peoples of Ethiopia have never been

¹ A description of the author's journey over Ethiopia's new roads is given in *The New Abyssinia*.

educated up to the level of wanting the products that money can buy. This not only hinders production and trade within the country, but is also responsible for a situation, not uncommon elsewhere in Africa, in which the natives are disinclined to work more than is absolutely necessary for the bare essentials of life. Hence native labour cannot reach its full value, nor can production for native consumption progress until education and development have succeeded in stimulating the desire for a higher standard of living. For this reason alone I think the Italians are right to push ahead with constructional work which may at first sight appear to be unnecessarily elaborate. Imposing edifices and other outward signs of European civilization not only impress the natives, but arouse in them a wish to participate in a way of life which appears to them glamorous. It is of the utmost importance to the Italians that the native peoples of Ethiopia should develop a definite incentive for productive work and become consumers of Ethiopian products. Education, therefore, should go hand in hand with constructional work and the introduction of European amenities, and there is every indication that these are the lines on which the Government is working. At present, the native population is rather a dead weight.

The whole subject of education has had to be dealt with from the beginning. While no attempt is made to educate adults, every encouragement is given to the native population to send their children to the new Italian schools which are increasing in number throughout the country. Although, in many cases, material inducements have to be offered to stimulate an interest in the education of the young, the number of children receiving elementary instruction is increasing every day. Teaching is given in Italian and in the native language or languages of the State concerned, and there is nearly always an interpreter. The school-teachers are chiefly Eritreans supervised by Italians, who are in many cases priests or nuns with knowledge of the country. Education is also provided for the children of ex-slaves, and in

Addis Abeba there is a school where one hundred such children are kept, fed, and educated by the Italian Government. For ex-slaves themselves the Government have founded special villages where shelter, assistance, and work are provided for those who are not in a position to help themselves. Such villages have grown up in Kaffa, in Galla, and Sidama, and in Amhara, while others are in course of construction. The object of these villages is to provide a special kind of life for those slave-minded natives who are unfit for education and would otherwise become a dead weight in the regeneration of the native peoples.

In introducing a system of justice into a country where the feudal system prevailed, the Italians have taken great care to preserve as far as possible local traditions and customs. Indeed, it is only where these conflict with order and good government that they have been superseded or modified. This, of course, applies only to civil cases, which are left as far as possible in the hands of native inhabitants themselves and their own leaders. The Italian authorities only step in where decisions cannot be reached or when they are asked to do so in the first instance. Special provision is made for Christians, Moslems, and pagans, to settle their own private law cases as they have been accustomed to do for centuries. Criminal cases, on the other hand, are dealt with by the Italian courts according to the law of Italy, while military or political offences committed by soldiers, Europeans, or natives are dealt with by the military courts.

The principle followed by the Italians with regard to religion is that in all regions the religion of the majority takes precedence; but religious liberty is complete, and as far as the country as a whole is concerned the different religions are regarded on a basis of absolute equality. Although there is no interference whatever with the form of religion practised by the Ethiopian Church, the Italians have replaced the Egyptian Abuna by one of Ethiopian nationality,¹ and have made illegal the evils

¹ Vide Chapter XI.

under which this church has laboured for centuries. The priesthood is no longer able to exert an influence in politics nor to extract tribute from the native inhabitants. In exchange for these restrictions the Church receives financial and other material assistance from the Government. The Moslem religion, on the other hand, has the advantage of being relieved of the domination of the Amhara Christians, and is now free to pursue its traditional methods without interference. Christian proselytizing is only allowed in the pagan districts, and is there confined to Italian Roman Catholic missionaries and priests of the Ethiopian Church.

The small Jewish community is protected and given every facility to live according to their traditions. In Amhara a Jewish school has been opened, in which the children of this Jewish minority can be educated.

With the abolition of the feudal system and slavery a great change has taken place in the conditions of life of the native population. The Rases and other chiefs, who submitted, retain their lands in their entirety, but have no authority whatever over those who previously owed allegiance to them. Apart from the incomes which they derive from their own land, they receive certain grants from the Government, and some have been appointed to command native armed bands in co-operation with Italian officers. The only part they now take in the Government of the country is of a purely advisory nature, when their opinions on local questions are likely to be helpful to the Italian authorities. Other natives possessing land also retain their holdings, but are encouraged to cultivate them much more than they ever thought of doing before. They receive free gifts of seeds and plants, and are persuaded by loud speaker propaganda in the villages that they can benefit by the sale of their agricultural produce. While some land has been bought from the natives at a fair price, the only land which has been expropriated by the Italians is that belonging to the ex-Negus and the Rases who did not submit.

The attitude of the Italians towards the natives must

seem strange at first to any British observer with no previous experience of the Italian colonial system. The British system in Africa has always followed a rigid course of putting up a strong barrier between white and black, though at the same time giving to the natives the same high standard of justice as the white man enjoys. A spirit of strict moderation governs the Englishman's dealings with the natives under his control, but the black man is always made to understand that his position is one of inferiority. The idea of the white man doing manual labour of any kind is regarded as quite out of the question on the grounds that it is unbecoming to his prestige. There is no familiarity between the Englishman and his native subordinate, any more than there is between an officer and a private soldier on parade. But the natives under British rule receive education up to any standard for which they are fitted, and are encouraged to fit themselves for posts of responsibility in the Government's service. We have also seen that in the Sudan the tribal chiefs play an important part as intermediaries in the government of the country.

In the Italian system the barrier between white and black is much more flexible than it is with us. In some matters it is even more formidable, while in others it is removable according to individual circumstances. Although the black man is definitely regarded as an inferior, there is a tendency on the part of the Italians to indulge at times in a certain familiarity with natives, and even to spoil native servants with undue consideration and attention. I have never seen an Italian curse or bully a native. The attitude is rather one of dignified politeness and humanity except where firmness is needed. This usually takes the form of one short sharp reproof, but in cases of serious trouble the Italians believe that severity is in the end the most humane policy. Their argument is that trouble must be stamped out immediately by the most severe measures, as an example to others and to ensure peace for the future.

One of the great differences between the British and

Italian systems is based on the respective attitudes towards manual labour. For some strange reason the average Englishman regards manual labour as degrading, while the Italian takes the exactly opposite view. It is quite common both in Libya and in East Africa to see the Italians doing manual labour side by side with the natives, and as far as one can see this is done without any loss of prestige. Indeed the Italian belief that manual labour is a most honourable occupation for a healthy man has a beneficial effect on the Amharas, who have always regarded this form of work as only fit for slaves. Although the natives of Ethiopia are now offered such education as will fit them for ordinary occupations within their own sphere of life, there is no intention of Europeanizing these people by higher education or of preparing them for any higher responsible positions in the Government service. The Italians maintain that the experience of other colonial powers has shown that higher education for natives usually ends in trouble. Although the Italians are at present adopting a direct system of governing the native races, it is quite possible that later on they will gradually adopt an indirect system of ruling through the chiefs. They are most ready to profit from the successful experience of others as well as from their own mistakes, and there are already distinct signs of a change of policy introducing a new code for the relations between the Italian officials and the native inhabitants.

One of the most difficult problems to be solved with regard to the native population is that of public health, which until the Italian occupation was practically non-existent. For centuries the peoples of Ethiopia have been eaten up with disease, and their condition to-day is positively pathetic. As the diseases from which they suffer are of the worst variety known to the medical profession, the task facing the Italian medical authorities is one that will demand continuous attention for a long period of time. From the moment the Italians arrived in Ethiopia the work of giving medical attention to the natives was begun, and it is remarkable now to see the

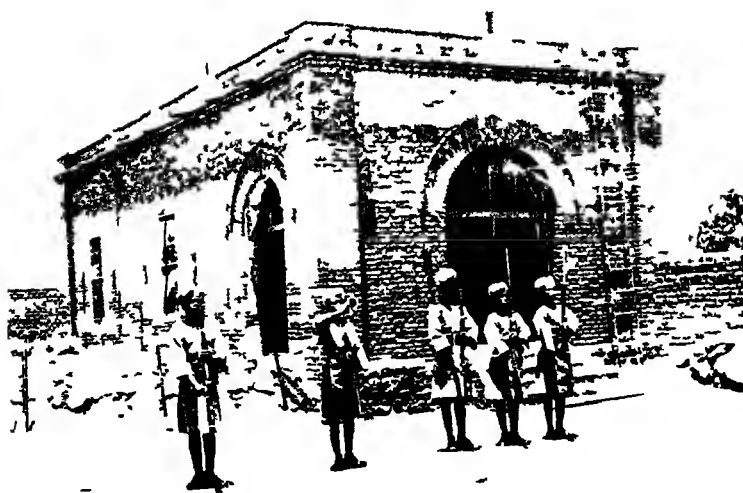
number of temporary hospitals and clinics which have been opened throughout the country to supplement those of a more permanent nature. The clinics in the smaller towns and villages are surrounded from morning till night by natives clamouring for medical attention, and the number of doctors and nurses sent out from Italy is continually increasing. Great efforts are also being made in study and research.

Fortunately the Italians made a good start in Ethiopia from a medical point of view ; for, thanks to the remarkable efforts of Sir Aldo Castellani, the deaths from disease among the Italian troops during the recent war were about half the number of those killed in action. Special attention is being paid to the prevention of disease and to measures improving the health conditions of the natives. In Addis Abeba alone 115,000 natives have been known to be vaccinated in the course of one month, and drastic steps have been taken by the health authorities to fight the ravages of venereal disease, malaria, and typhus, which have long been the scourges of Ethiopia. In an effort to improve the nourishment of the native inhabitants, research is being made into the relative values of various foodstuffs ; for it is believed that with better feeding the natives will be able to do better work, and thereby attain a higher standard of living. But one of the most important innovations affecting the future is the introduction of a proper system of maternity and child welfare to supersede damaging practices hitherto prevalent. Mobile maternity units are being used to an increasing extent. Efforts are also being made to teach the younger generation of Ethiopia to live a healthy and vigorous life, so that the coming generation may start to build up a standard of fitness previously unknown.

In the spring of 1938 conditions in Addis Abeba were considerably better than the year before, although the great increase of the European population had caused some temporary discomfort. The streets were assuming broad, smooth surfaces, and motor traffic was much



KASSALA, ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN



1701 Major M. F. Gubbins

GALLABAT, ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
S. SUDAN ARAB CORPS



HRH IHI DLKI OI AOSTA VICEROY OI LITHIOPIA

heavier. The Ethiopians now walked for the first time on concrete pavements, and pedestrians were even encouraged to cross the street on the 'dotted line.' Many new buildings had been put up, and a new and well-organized stone market-place was almost completed. This formed part of the native quarter of the new capital, which is being built on more or less level ground about 600 feet lower than the present town. The plans for broad avenues and elaborate buildings had already been approved and work had already begun. The conditions for Europeans and the general amenities of life were steadily improving, although the question of bringing a sufficient supply of water to the town still awaited a solution. There had been many additions to the number of shops and general stores, and there was no shortage of ordinary domestic commodities, or even of the lesser luxuries. There was no truth in the report, published in a British newspaper, that the Italians were reduced to eating cats, dogs, and monkeys ! During the last two years hotel accommodation has been greatly improved—so much so that it has been possible for parties of tourists to visit the principal centres and see something of the parts of the country which are served by good roads. While the native towns throughout the country are being cleaned up and made much more sanitary, new European towns are rapidly growing up at centres such as Gondar, Gimma, Dessié, Makale, and Adua. Asmara is growing with great rapidity, and anyone returning to the town after a year's absence finds it quite unrecognizable.

Naturally the development of Ethiopia has given a stimulus to further development in the former colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. Efforts are now being made to make their varying resources fit in with those of Ethiopia, so that all Italian East Africa can go forward as a composite whole, each part contributing what it can for the benefit of the complete Empire. Eritrea and Italian Somaliland as independent colonies were poor countries with few possibilities, but the situation has changed now that they are attached to an Ethiopia under Italian rule.

Communications of all kinds are being improved; agriculture has received encouragement, and new industries are growing up. As the Italians aim at making their Empire as self-sufficient as possible, there is always a market comparatively close at hand for anything that these colonies can produce. Until quite recently conditions in the former colonies were much more advanced than in Ethiopia; but now the time is rapidly approaching when the standard throughout the whole Empire will be level, and the whole can progress evenly together.

Colonization is still in its infancy, and so far comparatively few Italians are settled on the land. The settlement of Europeans can only proceed in the wake of public security, road building, and the provision of accommodation; and the way is not yet clear for settlers in large numbers. Meanwhile, expert investigation continues in all districts with a view to obtaining concessions for colonization on an industrial basis. Italian colonization is of two kinds: (1) The settlement of Italian families on the land; and (2) Industrial colonization carried out by Italian companies. A beginning is being made with the settlement of families in districts such as Woghera, Cher-Cher, and Gimma, where there is plenty of water and the climate is suitable for Europeans. At present cultivation is confined to the growing of such foodstuffs as are necessary to meet local needs.

The work in these districts has been handed over to an association of ex-soldiers, which has already been responsible for reclaiming the Pontine Marshes in Italy; while their economic administration is in the hands of three colonization boards, which take their names from the Italian provinces which they represent. By co-operation between the various provinces in Italy, the settlers are chosen so as to supply the variety of workers needed for development purposes. This ex-soldiers' association has already done much of the work on several thousand hectares¹ at Oletta and Bishoftu, near Addis Abeba, where a hundred farms will soon be in working order.

¹ Hectare=2.47 acres.

These regional colonization boards are responsible for about 50,000 hectares of land and for the settlement of 3,000 families of colonists. Each board, which has at its disposal 50 million lire, advises and helps the colonists in their work, gives payments for the products grown, and arranges for their marketing. As soon as the colonists have paid off what they owe to the board for setting them up and giving them a start, they become the sole proprietors of the pieces of land which they have developed. Besides these larger enterprises, there are a number of private homesteads run by small farmers and ex-service men with moderate means at their disposal. These people receive from the Government grants of land varying from 5 to 30 hectares, all of which are in the neighbourhoods of Addis Abeba, Dessié, Gondar, and Harar.

The Italian system is now most methodical, everything being done to insure that colonists settle down in their new homes immediately they arrive in the country. In Libya the new arrivals walk into their homes to find everything ready for them down to the smallest detail. I recently visited one of these new settlements near Misurata in Libya just before the arrival of a large party of colonists. The houses were completely furnished; the kitchens were fully equipped from pots and pans to boxes of matches; the water and electric light were turned on; the plots of land were ploughed ready for sowing; the agricultural implements were all neatly arranged in sheds; and the live-stock already occupied the farmyards. As in many forms of Italian colonization the settlers are grouped according to their villages of origin in Italy, transportation to Africa does not involve the breaking of family ties usually associated with settlement overseas. It is merely a question of families continuing the work to which they have been accustomed in new surroundings and under somewhat different conditions. In all these settlements everything is provided for the ordinary life of the settlers. Churches, schools, hospitals, shops, and means of recreation are already constructed before the

settlers arrive, so that there is no period of acute discomfort and nothing to interfere with the earlier stages of cultivation. Although in Ethiopia all this is in its primary stage, the system there will be on the same model as the remarkable example of Italian colonization already working in Libya.

Industrial colonization is destined to play a large part in the development of Italian East Africa, and a start has already been made to exploit the staple products of the country with the help of native labour. Modern agricultural machinery is now being used in the growing of cereals in 20,000 hectares of land in the neighbourhood of Addis Abeba and in the State of Amhara. By this means the Italians hope to produce most of the 800,000 tons of corn necessary to feed the European and native populations. A beginning has also been made with the growing of cotton and sugar on an extensive scale, and an industrial plant is being set up to convert these raw materials into various kinds of finished products. Cotton is grown in four different zones under the direction of industrial associations, which provide the natives with seeds, help the work of production, arrange for the process of ginning, and provide the necessary transport. In the spring of 1938 it was said that 3,000 tons of cotton seeds were sown in Italian East Africa.

As there are great possibilities for the rearing of cattle and sheep throughout large areas, the Italians are working hard to stamp out cattle disease and improve the fitness of live-stock generally. Important research work in the use of serums and vaccines is being carried out at various centres, and a special mission has been sent to South Africa to make a study of the diseases of animals. Under the previous regime the disease amongst animals was no less prevalent than among human beings. Hence the Italians are faced with the task of raising the standard of fitness of great quantities of live-stock before they can start cross-breeding on a large scale, with a view to establishing breeds of cattle and sheep suitable to the country and profitable in meat, milk, wool, and hides.

Yet something is already being done to improve the breeds of live-stock, and the natives are being encouraged to co-operate in this for their own benefit. These are some of the beginnings of Italy's great undertaking, which consists of nothing more nor less than the complete transformation of a primitive system of agriculture into a systematic agricultural enterprise on the most modern lines. That the process will be a long one goes without saying. The country is large and in some places the difficulties will be great.

Up to date the Italians have been devoting their energies to consolidating their newly acquired territory and equipping it with the more essential needs of modern life and progress. Yet the whole structure is practically immobile, and the time has come to set it in motion. This could not be done under conditions at all favourable until the Anglo-Italian Agreement became operative, with recognition by Great Britain of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia, and a trade agreement for trade and transit facilities over the frontiers of surrounding British and Anglo-Egyptian territories. Not only does 'recognition' strengthen the Italian position politically, but it ensures co-operation for the public security of the frontier districts, while a subsequent trade agreement will go a long way to setting the wheels of progress in motion. Italian Ethiopia, now established as a reality beyond all doubt in spite of local disturbances, will then form a living part of the world's political and economic structure.

CHAPTER IX

ITALY'S AFRICAN WEALTH

WHATEVER other sources of wealth the country may contain, Ethiopia's most important value to Italy and the outside world comes from agriculture. Until lately the extensive cultivable areas referred to in the previous chapter were put to little use by the native inhabitants, who under the feudal system had no inducements to grow more than was absolutely necessary to pay their taxes in kind and feed their families. This was particularly the case in the most fertile regions of the south and south-west, where depopulation as a result of the slave trade has left huge areas of rich and well-watered country almost without any cultivation at all. In a country with such variety of climate and altitude, the agricultural produce under the former regime gave no indication of its possibilities. Crops were restricted to those used by the natives, and vegetables were not grown for the simple reason that the natives do not eat them. Coffee was the only important product grown for export. Hence a great deal of experimental work has now to be carried out in order to discover exactly what can be grown in all the different climates and altitudes. As inquiries of this kind take a long time to complete, the information at present available can only be of a preliminary nature.

Investigations indicate that, while there are extensive possibilities for developing and improving existing crops, there are great opportunities for the introduction of new forms of cultivation, thereby producing a large annual yield of a quality sufficiently high to compete successfully

in world markets. Cereals of various kinds can be raised all over the country. Cotton, oil-seeds, and rubber can be cultivated in the valleys of rivers and wherever irrigation is possible. Coffee, already extensively grown, can be greatly improved in quality and the production rationalized. Products such as bananas, sugar-cane, tea, and quinine can be introduced with every prospect of success. Various forms of native corn are already grown, such as taff which thrives at altitudes of from 3,000 to 9,000 feet, and is used extensively by the Amharas for bread. Dagusa is also used to a lesser extent for bread, and by the Gallas it is employed in the production of native beer. Dura is used all over the country, and it produces a form of alcohol, and an inferior variety of maize is extensively cultivated.

Oats and wheat are at present scarce, as they require more attention than other grain, but the former may be grown between 3,000 and 10,500 feet with two harvests a year, while the latter can be cultivated up to 9,000 feet. Wild cotton is found in most parts of Ethiopia except in the higher altitudes, but the best districts for its cultivation are the Shire, Gimma, Lake Margherita, and along most of the river valleys. Varieties equal to the highest quality of Egyptian cotton are being introduced, as has already been done in the plantations of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, such as Tessenci, Genale, Villaggio Duca Abruzzi, and the concessions on the Juba River, and should become one of the more important commercial products. Several varieties of oil-seeds are already grown. Nug, which can be cultivated from 5,000 to 7,000 feet, produces oil for lighting and cooking. Other oil-seeds are linseed and sesame, while ground nuts are produced in considerable quantities in the Somaliland concessions. Although investigations of the possibilities of rubber are not yet complete, it is expected that supplies will be obtained from the vast number of trees known as *Forbia Candelabra*, which is very common throughout large areas.

Harar coffee is already well known, but it is seldom

realized that the name derives its origin from the region of Kaffa in Ethiopia, where a good quality of coffee has long been grown. Other districts from which coffee is already exported are Gimma, Sidamo, Lekemti, and the Gojjam. As Italy has a trade agreement with Brazil for the import of coffee, it is intended in Ethiopia to produce a good quality at a reasonable price for sale in Egypt, Europe, and the United States. The cultivation of bananas has been most successful in the plantations along the Webi Shebeli and Juba Rivers, and there are many other parts of the Empire where the cultivation of bananas can be profitable. Sugar-cane is now grown at the Villaggio Duca Abruzzi, and could be extended to other localities under 600,000 feet, while beet sugar can be produced on the high plateau. The prospects are also favourable for the introduction of tea and quinine, but the latter takes fifteen years to mature. Although the quinine plantations in Eritrea are as yet only eight years old, they appear to be in a healthy condition.

Other products for which there are great possibilities are vegetables, fruits, tobacco, castor oil, and olives. As hitherto the Ethiopians have made no attempt to grow either vegetables or fruits, these will be introduced. This has already been done to some extent in the colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. It is surprising to see the rapidity with which vegetables grow in many parts of the country which differ widely in altitude and climate. At Bahrdar (on Lake Tana), at Saio (in Western Ethiopia) and at Negelli (in the south of Sidamo) I have seen gardens started only a month previously which were already yielding an adequate daily supply of tomatoes, beans, cabbage, lettuce, etc. Citrous fruits and olives grow wild over a considerable part of the country; and a visit to the concessions on the Juba and Webi Shebeli is sufficient to show the success that can be attained, wherever irrigation is possible, with the cultivation of oranges, grapefruit, and bananas.

Besides the products already enumerated, there are many others, such as kapok and tobacco, which may

well be cultivated successfully in suitable localities ; for there is a wide range in the varieties of soil and climate, and it would be difficult to find anything which would not thrive in some part of Italian East Africa. Flying over the western half of Ethiopia, you obtain a striking impression of regions of fertile country, well wooded in parts, which are available for Italian cultivation and development. At the same time, it is remarkable to see here and there the small patches of native cultivation, which are infinitesimal in proportion to the agricultural possibilities. It would be hard to imagine a country-side more promising, and in which less had been done to make use of the rich gifts of Nature. Even in the regions of southern Eritrea and eastern Amhara there are extensive plains where water can be obtained near the surface, and which would seem to hold out good prospects for agricultural enterprise.

Live-stock also forms an important factor in the agricultural wealth of the country, and in this direction there are great possibilities for improvement and development. This branch of agriculture is of importance to Italy owing to the large quantities of cattle and meat which she has formerly had to import from abroad. While cattle raising has been successfully carried out for some time in Italian Somaliland, in Ethiopia only the most primitive methods of stock farming were known. Cattle were employed by the natives for food and as draught animals, and the export of hides constituted the chief trade of the country. Sixty per cent of these hides found their way to different parts of the British Empire. This old-established trade is being reorganized and encouraged by Italians, who want to export to foreign countries in order to increase their supplies of foreign currency. Previous to the Italo-Ethiopian War it was estimated that there were from ten to twelve million head of cattle in Ethiopia, but this number was considerably reduced during the war by the depredations of the Ethiopian Army, and for many years the natural increase had been checked by disease. Ethiopian cattle, however, have good powers of resistance

and respond well to inoculations, whereas European cattle have mostly succumbed when subjected to this treatment after importation. An extensive veterinary service is being established in order to deal with all forms of cattle disease. At present there is only one main breed of Ethiopian cattle with certain variations, the humped type known as the 'Zebu.' The quantity of milk given by the cows is poor, but the fat content is high in proportion, and is nearly double that of the average European cow. For this reason the prospects for dairy farming are good, and a company has already started investigation into its possibilities.

The question of cross-breeding is also being carefully studied, and investigations are being carried out in Kenya, where conditions and climate are similar. Naturally, the quality of the cattle varies very considerably in different localities. While those in northern Eritrea are thin and poorly nourished, animals in such districts as Lake Tana, Wollo Galla, the Gojjam, and the whole south-western area are larger and fatter according to the respective value of the pasturage. The Italians intend to exploit to the fullest extent the whole industry of cattle raising, partly with the idea of establishing an export trade in frozen and tinned meat. Sheep are found all over Ethiopia in many breeds and cross-breeds, but the wool is poor in quality and quantity. For this reason the Italians intend to introduce into parts of the Ethiopian plateau, where conditions are similar, Merino sheep which are successfully bred in Kenya. The best districts for this purpose are those situated between 4,500 and 8,500 feet. In Eritrea breeding has been tried between the Persian Astrakhan and the local black goat, which has produced a cross-breed with fine glossy black pelt. Owing to the importance which Italy attaches to the production of wool, considerable research work is being carried out with regard to cross-breeding and the introduction of suitable strains.

Hitherto horse breeding has been confined to the Galla tribes, and these horses have been chiefly used throughout

Ethiopia for the breeding of mules. The Ethiopian horse, however, is a small but sturdy type, and has been found to cross satisfactorily with Arab stallions and Sardinian mares. Mules and donkeys have long been used by the Ethiopians for transport purposes, and there are a great many of them in the country. The Ethiopian mule, well known throughout the world as a good saddle and pack animal, will continue to be bred for use in these vast tracts of country lying between the new lines of communications. At present they cost more than horses but, as the demand decreases owing to modern forms of transport, the price should fall accordingly. Native poultry, though numerous, cannot be regarded as a table delicacy, and the eggs are diminutive in size; but arrangements are being made for the introduction of various breeds from abroad, and incubation experiments are being carried out. Bees are kept to some extent by the natives in the west, and a large production of honey and wax for export is possible in the future.

In visiting the country in the west and south-west of Ethiopia it was obvious that there are regions possessing extensive timber resources. In the districts of Gimma, Kaffa, Saio, and the lakes, these are dense and extensive forests containing valuable woods suitable for building purposes and the manufacture of furniture. In the Anfilo Forest it is said that fifty-six different varieties of wood have been counted, and among them ebony, mahogany, juniper, and varieties of rosewood. Hitherto the only use to which these woods have been put has been for manufacture of furniture by missionaries, and to a very limited extent for building purposes. In fact, the timber wealth of the country was so little appreciated by Menelik that he gave grants of land to those who destroyed the forests. During the time of the ex-Negus, six concessions were granted for the erection of saw-mills, but three of these were never put into operation. Small saw-mills are now being started by the Italians to meet local needs, but it is expected that the timber trade will become one of considerable importance when the whole subject of the

forests has been fully investigated, and when means of transport have been provided.

As is to be expected in newly acquired territory, the industries which are at present receiving most attention are those providing material for constructional work. As large quantities of these materials have had to be imported from Italy, the Italians are naturally anxious to make full use of local raw materials at the earliest possible moment. The cost of importing large quantities of cement for building purposes has in recent years been heavy, and shortage of this product has held up constructional work besides delaying the building of houses for colonization schemes. Energetic steps have, therefore, been taken to find local limestone and to set up cement factories with the least possible delay. Factories are now fully operating at Massawa, Dessié, Addis Abeba, Harar, and Mogadishu. At Dessié, where there is great building activity, the annual output of the factory amounts to 300,000 tons.

As experts in the production and use of electric power, the Italians have been quick to realize the possibilities of making use of the country's water supply. In fact, one of the first development companies to be formed was that for the creation of electrical power for the starting and maintenance of industries. The primary function of this company is to provide the chief centres with electric light, and to find out how far hydro-electric power can be used for the benefit of the essential public services. In 1938 the electric light in Addis Abeba was still generated by gas engines, but this was only a temporary measure to tide over the time until electricity could be obtained from water-power. It is believed that valuable water-power can be derived from the Blue Nile, at the place where the river makes a bend to the south and reaches its nearest point to Addis Abeba. It is also estimated that the whole of Italian East Africa can be supplied with electricity from the lakes and such rivers as the Blue Nile, the Omo, and the Awash.

The mineral resources of Italian East Africa cannot yet

be described in much detail owing to the long time necessary for complete investigation in so large a territory, but there is a certain amount of information available about minerals which are known to exist, and those which there is good reason to believe are present in certain regions. It has long been known that gold exists in the country, but much misleading information has been current regarding the significance of this fact. The truth is that gold is to be found in Eritrea and in western Ethiopia. In Eritrea it is to be found in the neighbourhood of Asmara and between that town and the Sudan frontier. In western Ethiopia it is found in the rivers of Wollega and Beni Shangul, especially in the Bir-Bir River and in the valley of the Ghibié, a tributary of the Omo. In Eritrea the gold is found in reefs and, although the percentage of gold in the sulphides varies considerably, many of the mines look like becoming profitable concerns. One mine has an output of nearly 100 kilogrammes a month. In western Ethiopia the gold is found in the red sand of the rivers from which it has to be washed out. At Iubdo, on the Bir-Bir River, platinum is found mixed with gold and other minerals, and the annual output of platinum is from 200 to 250 kilogrammes a year. Plants for carrying out the cyanide process of extracting gold are being set up, and it is hoped by this means considerably to increase the output. Most of the scientific investigations with regard to gold and other minerals, as well as responsibility for their subsequent working, are in the hands of the East African Mining Company which has opened a laboratory at Asmara to examine the results of the various mineral concessions.

Among the other minerals which have actually been discovered are iron, lead, and lignite in Amhara ; potash in the Tigré ; cinnabar in Shoa ; copper in Kaffa and Amhara ; mercury in the neighbourhood of Harar ; rock-salt in the Danakil Desert and on the sea coast at Massawa and Assab ; and marble and mica in different parts of the country. Although much has been said and written about the presence of oil in Ethiopia, expert

investigation up to date does not justify undue optimism. There is no doubt that oil does exist in the regions to the south of the Red Sea. It has been found in British Somaliland, although it has never been used for commercial purposes, and it is used by the natives of the Danakil. There are also signs of oil in the islands of the Dahlak Archipelago, off Massawa, and experts believe that the quantity may be sufficient to be of some commercial value. But there is quite a possibility that the real source of the oil in this part of the world is situated under the waters of the Red Sea, in which case its recovery would be somewhat difficult. In any case, there is no doubt that the Italians will spare no effort in their searches for oil, which is consumed in great quantities by their aviation and motor-transport services, on which their essential communications depend. As all this oil has to be bought from abroad and paid for in foreign currency, it is a serious item in the annual budget.

As is to be expected, trade and commerce are in a state of transition during the period of the change-over from the old system to the new. Ever since the Italian occupation the trade between Italy and her new Empire has been heavy, chiefly owing to the large quantities of material needed for constructional work and essential services. As time passes, the amount of foodstuffs imported from Italy decreases, while exports from Italian East Africa to Italy increase in volume. The Italians maintain that in the first year of their occupation goods were imported from Italy to the value of 1,672 million lire, and that of these only 20 per cent were foodstuffs. In 1937, the official figures for imports from Italy were 2 milliards, 110 million lire. In the same year, the East African products exported to Italy are stated to have been as follows:—undressed skins, 110,000 tons valued at 167 million lire; bananas, 223,000 tons valued at 43 million lire; coffee, 21,000 tons valued at 15 million lire; seed oils 18,000 tons valued at 2½ million lire; cotton, 3,000 tons, and palm oil seeds, 20,000 tons—the two latter being valued at 1½ million lire. As most of the imports

from foreign countries are re-exported from Italy, they are included in the imports from Italy. They are largely made up of metal and iron goods, rubber goods, machinery, motor vehicles, mineral oils, and miscellaneous articles for constructional work and the general needs of the European population. In 1937 the official figures show that Italian East Africa exported to foreign countries coffee, skins, salt, incense, ivory, civet, and other goods to the value of over 60 million lire. While it is true that the exports of coffee and hides from Ethiopia were reduced to a low level after the arrival of the Italians, there are obvious reasons for this. The old system collapsed with the war, and proper communications had to be established before the country's resources could be more fully developed and trade reorganized on new lines. This meant that a considerable proportion of the native population were engaged on road-building and other public works. These considerations, together with the increase of the European population from 2,000 to 500,000 were responsible for bringing the traditional export trade of Ethiopia to a temporary standstill.

The Italians are now anxious to sell to the Sudan, but have little to offer which the Sudan wants over and above coffee exports, valued in 1937, at £E.138,855. Both are agricultural countries. The Sudan's total imports from Ethiopia in that year were only £E.145,031, while her exports to Ethiopia (chiefly salt) were valued at £E.56,090. As the great agricultural and so far unestimated mineral resources are developed, there is no doubt that some kind of market will be found in the Sudan. Yet the real importance of the Sudan to the Italians will be as a transit country, details of which will be described later on.¹

That the natural resources of Italian East Africa are great is convincing to all who know that country, but it is necessary to see in order to believe. Meanwhile, with development still in its early stages, there are as yet few products which the Italians can exchange with their neighbours for goods and services. Of these, coffee of

¹ *Vide* Chapter XII.

high quality is the outstanding product ready for market, and its production can be greatly increased throughout large areas of the country. But, as the realization of products for export—even the intensive cultivation of coffee—takes time, the question of exchanging goods and services with other countries is one which theoretically belongs to the future. The currency question is wrapped up in international finance ; but in order to enable development to proceed quickly so that the Italians can have the necessary products to sell, something has to be done to set the wheels in motion in a forward direction.

Things have been moving in a vicious circle. The Italians need foreign currency in which to trade and pay for transit, in order to develop the country ; and this they cannot obtain in the ordinary way till the country is developed sufficiently to produce what others want to buy. This circle has got to be broken by resorting to unusual means. Whether it be by a loan, by foreign investment, by concessions, by the employment of services, or by some ingenious system of credit, some way must be found of enabling the British and Egyptians in Egypt and the Sudan to co-operate economically with the new proprietors of Ethiopia. This is not a matter of patching up a quarrel and then letting things take their natural course. Important issues are at stake, which call for a determined effort to overcome the difficulties in the way of satisfactory and harmonious co-operation between Britain, Italy, and Egypt in North-East Africa. This co-operation is in the fundamental interests of all concerned.

On the Italian side, the authorities have been trying to devise ways of overcoming their shortage of sterling currency. Although some of their suggestions may be quickly abandoned in favour of others, they show the directions in which the Italian mind has been working. The question of a British loan to Italy is never mentioned by Italian officials as falling outside their self-contained financial policy, but official opinion in Egypt and elsewhere has strongly favoured such a course. The Italians

have, however, already taken action to facilitate the investment of foreign capital in Italy in the terms of the Royal Decree Law No. 2375 of 6 December 1937, and the facilities given also apply to Italian East Africa. According to this measure, foreign capital can be introduced into the country for investment in approved enterprises and withdrawn in foreign currency at will. The rent, interest, and profits up to a maximum of 5 per cent on landed property, loans, and bonds, can also be withdrawn, as well as the dividends and interest (without limit), on bearer shares or bonds purchased or subscribed in Italy by foreigners. These facilities, which remained originally open till the end of 1939, carried with them important exemptions from taxation. One paragraph in particular is worth quoting verbatim: 'Furthermore, such investments and securities shall not, even in the event of war, be confiscated, expropriated without indemnity, or otherwise blocked in such a manner as to prevent their free disposal.'

It is maintained that such investment of foreign capital would actually contribute to the more rapid realization of Italian self-sufficiency; and it is claimed that, in view of the geographical position of western Ethiopia with regard to Egypt and the Sudan, British and Egyptian capital should find investment in that country attractive. It is also believed that in a country where the climate is almost European and cultivation is cheap, foreigners will interest themselves in development projects. The Italians foresee here a means whereby they can reach self-sufficiency through a policy of producing at lower cost than elsewhere, and thereby overcoming competition in the world markets. In this way it is hoped that the produce of Italian East Africa will find a ready sale in the markets of Egypt and the Sudan. As a forerunner of the important development which the Italians expect in this extensive region of great fertility, the Banco di Roma has already opened branches at Saio, Lekemti, Gimma, and Gambela.

The most comprehensive and long-range possibility of

obtaining sterling is wrapped up in an idea of making commercial use of the vast downpour of water during the rains, which fall in different parts of Ethiopia at different seasons of the year. This conception may at first sight seem fantastic, but the fact remains that a country with annual torrential rains marches with countries to which water from outside their frontiers is a vital need. In Ethiopia, apart from the rainfall that swells the tributaries of the Nile, much finds its way into the Omo which flows into Lake Rudolph, and into the Awash which loses itself in the Danakil Desert. There is also a great quantity which fills the torrents (dried-up watercourses) during the rainy season, and is either lost in the ground or fills no useful purpose. The idea is that by means of small dams and artificial lakes, much of this water could be collected, partly for irrigation purposes within the country, and partly for supplementing the water of the Nile tributaries during the season when water is most needed in the Sudan and Egypt. Although there is, of course, no question of taking any action with regard to anything affecting the Nile waters without the full consent and collaboration of the Sudan and Egypt, it has been suggested that sterling could be obtained in payment for the extra water added by this means to the normal Nile supply. In other words, a scheme such as this might enable the Italians to convert lire into sterling by constructing works and selling water.

Against this the Egyptians say that they do not want any more water at present, and it is contended that the Sudan's financial position is such that the extra cost would be too heavy a burden upon a country with a revenue of £E.4,748,302 and an expenditure of £E.4,457,440. Yet these arguments are not altogether sound, and the principle embodied in this idea may ultimately lead somewhere. There is still uncultivated land in Egypt, and a reserve of water is a safeguard which Egypt cannot despise. Also, the Sudan need never reject a sound economic project purely on the plea of a meagre budget; the loans guaranteed by the

British Treasury for the Gezireh scheme are ample proof of this. An example of what the Italians hope to do by this means in Eritrea is worthy of note. It is proposed to build a small dam about six miles north of Keren to create an artificial lake from the water of the Anseba. This will be conducted by means of a canal and a short tunnel through the mountains to the Lebka torrent, which will in turn convey it towards sea level for the irrigation of the large plain north of Massawa. This forbidding district will then be made cultivable.

There seems to be little doubt that, as development proceeds, a considerable part of Italy's new Empire will be opened up by means of concessions granted both to Italian companies and to companies financed partly by foreign capital. This specially applies to the exploitation of staple products suitable for the world's markets. Not only will foreign co-operation help the Italians financially, but will form a link between them and some of the markets in which they hope to sell their products. There is still a good deal of scepticism throughout Europe with regard to Ethiopia's economic possibilities as well as Italy's prospect in this part of the world, and one way of breaking this down is the participation of foreigners in the actual work of development. But before any foreign business man is going to sink capital in enterprises of this kind, he wants to see for himself exactly what possibilities there are of doing profitable business. For this reason it is important that there should be ample facilities for foreign business men to visit the country to carry out their investigations, and that reliable information of economic development should be available in the foreign countries where interest is likely to be aroused. The Italians have already organized several conducted tours and have speeded up the necessary hotel accommodation, but something more is wanted to impress a somewhat reluctant public throughout the world with the true economic facts of a country of considerable promise.

Italy may find it difficult quickly to attract interest in the economic possibilities of her New Empire, partly

because her methods have never been tried before, and partly on account of an unfavourable prejudice which has not yet been completely swept away. For these reasons it may be necessary, in order to hasten the desired results, to form commercial committees in the foreign countries most likely to become interested. If such committees were composed partly of Italians, and partly of nationals of the country concerned who have a thorough grasp from first-hand experience of the economic possibilities of Italian East Africa, they would stand a good chance of inspiring confidence by organizing exhibitions and co-operating with local chambers of commerce or similar bodies. Although the Italians could no doubt inspire the necessary confidence in course of time, I believe that this could be considerably speeded up with the help of reliable foreign mediation and support. Possibly the most natural, and therefore the best, solution of Italy's shortage of foreign currency will result from her non-belligerent position in the present European war. Italy's favourable economic position may not only provide her with much of the foreign currency she needs, but may help her substantially to strengthen her whole financial position. Indeed, the war seems to have come at an appropriate time for Italy, who may well emerge from its debris with her economic and financial difficulties greatly diminished, if not completely swept away. But, should this be the case, it would be no reason to drop ingenious plans for obtaining foreign currency, which have been devised under conditions of urgent need.

At present the chief preoccupation of the Italians with regard to trade with other countries is the establishment of satisfactory trade routes on all the frontiers of Italian East Africa. The eastern part of this territory depends on the ports of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden ; the southern part uses the Somali ports of the Indian Ocean ; and the natural outlet for the western half of Ethiopia is by way of the Nile. Massawa is the best natural harbour on the Red Sea, while Assab is a small bay where a new arti-

ficial harbour is being built. In the Gulf of Aden, Jibuti is a large bay hitherto without harbour works ; Zeila is an open roadstead with coral reefs ; and Berbera is the only sheltered anchorage on the south side of the Gulf. The Somali ports of Mogadishu, Merca, Brava, and Kisimayo are all open roadsteads. During the last three years extensive work has been carried out at Massawa, which will soon have ample quay accommodation for ocean-going ships, as well as for sailing-vessels and small craft. The port is now provided with up-to-date equipment, including electric cranes capable of lifting $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons, and other plant needed for the rapid handling of merchandise. The new port at Assab, which will cost 88 million lire, is at present under construction. An artificial harbour is being made by the building of breakwaters and the installation of the necessary equipment, and these works will be completed in the near future.

The other Italian ports are those on the Indian Ocean, all of which are being improved as far as it is possible. Of these Kisimayo has the advantage of small islands offshore which facilitate the building of a breakwater, but the most important improvements are taking place at Mogadishu where it is hoped to create a port capable of receiving large vessels and handling every kind of traffic. Similar improvements on a smaller scale are taking place at Merca and Brava, which do not lend themselves easily to harbour works of any kind. When the roads are complete, it is intended that Mogadishu should serve a hinterland extending from Harar to the Ogaden. Merca will be used almost entirely for the banana trade for which special ships have already been built and are now in service. Kisimayo will become the port for Negelli and for the towns on the Juba River. But these Italian ports, taken together, do not form an imposing array, and the situation is not much improved by the addition of the French port of Jibuti and the British ports of Berbera and Zeila, as they are at present. The only other outlet in the south is that across the Kenya frontier through Moyale, and other small trade routes.

The western outlets are by transit routes over the Sudan frontier, and communication with Port Sudan by way of the Nile and the Sudan railways. An agreement for the improvement and use of these outlets, with facilities in the Sudan for road, railway, and river transit and the use of Port Sudan, would be of great mutual benefit to all parties concerned. Details of the outlets at Gambela, Kurmuk, Gallabat, and Kassala will be given in a later chapter.¹ It is in this direction that most can be done to co-operate with the development of Italian East Africa in the interests of Britain, Italy, and Egypt. One reason why the Italians want to use these Sudan outlets is because the use of this route is more economical in time and money than the heavy transportation of western Ethiopian produce over the high mountains to the Red Sea ports. Also, as Italian East Africa develops, these ports of limited capacity will become insufficient to handle the full traffic of both east and west. On the British and Egyptian side there is the immediate prospect of increased revenue for the Sudan, and the possibility of future financial benefit to Egypt through transit and development projects.

The internal communications serving the Red Sea ports and other outlets chiefly consist of the tarmac roads which have already been described.² There are regular and frequent motor services along all the principal routes under the control of the Italian East African Transport Company. An auto-pullman service runs three times a week each way between Massawa, Dessié, and Addis Abeba, the distance of about 775 miles being covered in four days, including the necessary halts for the night. The other communications are provided by three railway lines serving Massawa, Jibuti, and Mogadishu. The Massawa-Asmara railway (950 mm. gauge) covers a distance of 75 miles and has been extended through Keren and Agordat to Biscia—within 75 miles of the Sudan frontier. Although steam trains still puff and blow up the steep gradients in the Eritrean mountains, the

¹ *Vide* Chapter XII,

² *Vide* Chapter VIII,

passenger service has been greatly accelerated by the introduction of a service of diesel-engine cars for Europeans, which reach Asmara in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. There is also an overhead ropeway between Massawa and Asmara. On this strange-looking contraption for carrying goods from sea-level to a height of nearly 7,000 feet there are 1,620 containers capable of carrying 30 tons an hour. The Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway (metre gauge)¹ is a slow-moving concern with steep gradients, which is only capable of carrying a small amount of passengers and goods on each train. Owing to the great increase of traffic since the Italian occupation, great efforts have been made to increase the carrying capacity of this line, but considerable reorganization will have to take place before it is fit to meet the needs of the new situation. While at first a great part of the Italian traffic used this route, road communication to the port of Massawa has to a large extent taken its place. The only remaining railway in Italian East Africa is a small line connecting Mogadishu with the large experimental farm at Villaggio Duca Abruzzi. This line, operated by steam trains and small diesel-engine cars, is used almost entirely for bringing the produce of this remarkable agricultural settlement to the port of Mogadishu.

Since the occupation, Italian steamship services to Massawa, Assab, Jibuti, and Mogadishu have been greatly increased. Besides the regular service of the Lloyd-Triestino to India and the Far East and to South Africa, there are several ships a week plying between Italian and East African ports, and many Italian ships now call at Jibuti. This French port is also served by the ships of the Messageries Maritimes on their way to Madagascar and Indo-China. So far there are no direct air services between Italy and the Red Sea ports, as the Ala Littoria service for passengers and mails goes by way of the Sudan and Egypt.

Although what has been described in this short account

¹ *Vide* Chapters X and XI.

of present conditions only scrapes the surface of an immense subject, it gives some idea of the rapid pace of twentieth-century colonization. One of the great difficulties which the Italians have to face is the strange fact that they are working far ahead of the minds of most people in Europe. To many this new form of colonization does not seem to bear the stamp of truth, and reports of Italian progress in Africa are received as if they were little more than fairy tales. But the fact remains that, since the occupation of Addis Abeba in the spring of 1936, an immense amount of construction and development work has been done in a vast country full of difficulties of a most varied kind. The results of Italy's labours are to be seen by anyone who cares to visit the country ; but in order to realize to the fullest extent what has been done, it is necessary to have seen Ethiopia as it was under the previous regime. The most astonishing thing of all is the speed with which everything has been accomplished, especially the construction of first-class motor roads through the mountains of northern Ethiopia. These roads are, without exaggeration, one of the wonders of the modern world. In this short space of time the whole country has been to all intents and purposes pacified ; a modern European administration has replaced a feudal system of great antiquity ; and the native population have been set on their way to a new lease of life. Although much time must pass, and a great deal of work has to be done, before the whole area reaches its full speed of development, the work of these first years is a convincing proof that the Italians have the will and the capacity to succeed.

Those who doubt the suitability of the Italians as colonists have only to cross the Mediterranean to Libya, where their preconceived notions will rapidly evaporate. The Italian peasant has few needs. He gets up with the sun, works hard all day, and goes to bed shortly after the day's work is done. As long as he has his wife and family, a house to live in and his simple food, he is perfectly content. He naturally loves the land,

and to him town life has few attractions. These characteristics, together with the plan for regional emigration from Italy, go far to ensure the contentment of Italians in their new surroundings. The land fit for cultivation is more than enough for Italian colonization as well as for native cultivation, so that there will be room for such foreigners as can bring benefit to the country as well as to themselves. But there is no room for Europeans who want to go to Italian East Africa as fortune hunters. Enough has been said about the great possibilities for trade and transit with Italy's neighbours in North-East Africa, but those who wish to benefit from the opening up of this territory of considerably promise must do their share in bringing about conditions in which use can be made of the opportunities offered. It is here that Egypt and the Sudan have an important part to play in co-operating with what is taking place across their frontiers. Although Italian East Africa and the countries of the Nile are both agricultural, and trade is, therefore, inclined to be parallel in many respects, there are also many ways in which their economic interests are complementary and where they can be of great service to one another.

CHAPTER X

BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND THE SOMALIS

AT first sight British Somaliland appears to be a meaningless stretch of territory on the south side of the Gulf of Aden, representing Britain's share in the scorching-hot stretch of coast inhabited by the Somali peoples. As negative information has too long formed the principal feature of Government reports on this Protectorate, the country remains an obscure part of the British Empire which succeeded in getting a little recognition from the general public as a result of the Italo-Ethiopian War. Although not even the wildest stretch of the imagination could convert British Somaliland into a pleasant or profitable British possession, the country is by no means devoid of merits nor of importance in the British imperial system.

With French Somaliland on one side and Italian Somaliland on the other, this British territory of about 68,000 square miles consists of a coastal plain, a maritime plain, a vertical ridge of limestone about 2,000 feet thick, and a featureless plateau reaching an altitude in some places of about 7,500 feet. The grazing of this plateau is indifferent, but it is here that most of the native population live with their camels, sheep, goats, and cattle. Those who reach British Somaliland by road from Jibuti get the impression that the country is one flat mass of sand and 'umbrella' trees, but if they continue their journey through Berbera and on to Sheikh they eventually find themselves in pleasant hilly surroundings with a reasonable climate. There are no

hotels of any kind in the country, but there are rest houses at Berbera and Hargeisa which are furnished and provide messing facilities. As there are no European private residents in British Somaliland, anyone who wants to visit the country has first to obtain permission from the Government. Also, unless arrangements have been made to stay with some Government official, it is essential for travellers to arrive in the Protectorate fully equipped with all the necessities of life. Although there are only 68 Europeans in the country there are $1\frac{1}{4}$ million camels, $2\frac{1}{2}$ million sheep, 2 million goats, 30,000 cattle, 2,000 donkeys, and 1,000 horses !

The Somalis, of whom there are about 350,000, are Hamitic by race, although culturally they have Semitic characteristics. The Ajis, or upper classes, consists of two distinct races—the Asha tribes of Arab descent, and the Hawiya of Galla descent. The Sab tribes, or outcasts, are quite a distinct race from the Somalis and are believed to be of Galla stock. The Somalis of the Protectorate are surrounded by people of their own race, except where they come in contact with the Gallas of Ethiopia who live in the Harar hills. The Sab tribes are scattered all over the country, and are not confined to any definite areas. The language spoken by the Somalis is similar to the Galla tongue, but all writing is done in Arabic. The Sab tribes all speak Somali, although some of them have a language of their own which is kept secret and about which little is known. Most of the people being nomads, there are few towns and villages. Of the coast towns only Zeila, Bulhar, and Berbera are of any importance, but there are also a number of villages where the tribes are more settled than elsewhere. In the interior there are the centres of Hargeisa, Burao, and Erigavo, all of which are situated on the main lines of communication such as they are.

As the Somalis are shepherds, and live in a country where grazing conditions compel them to move their flocks according to the seasons of the year, there is

a constant and regular coming and going of the tribes from north to south and vice versa. Some cross the frontiers into Italian territory, while others move north from these regions. Movements of this kind take place all over the country, each tribe having a definite area which it shares with one or more other tribes. But, as these tribal areas are not necessarily confined to British territory, the tribal situation has to be regularized by means of treaty with the neighbouring Italians. In religion the Somalis are Sunni Moslems. Although fanatical, the people of the interior are not strict in their religious observances, and probably the only reason why they are not more easygoing is that they receive periodic encouragement from wandering Mullahs. On the coast the tribes are somewhat stricter, partly owing to their being less nomadic than those of the interior, and partly because of their intercourse with Arabia.

Up to 1884 the administration of the Somali coast had been in the hands of the Egyptian Government ; but as a result of the collapse of Egyptian authority in the Sudan it was decided that the Egyptians should retire from the whole of the coast between the Straits of Babel-Mandeb and Ras Hafun on the Indian Ocean. As a result of this a Protectorate was proclaimed by Great Britain, and the respective frontiers were settled by agreement between France, Italy, and Ethiopia. The Somaliland Protectorate was for a time administered by the Resident at Aden as a dependency of the Government of India, but in 1898 it came under the control of the Foreign Office. In 1905 it was transferred to the Colonial Office.

From 1901 to 1920 the history of British Somaliland is little more than an account of campaigns against Mohammed bin Abdullah Hassan, better known as the 'Mad Mullah.' In 1901 and the two following years military expeditions were sent against the Mullah, who suffered a crushing defeat at Jidballeh at the beginning of 1904. He then retired into Italian territory where he

claimed Italian protection. An agreement was made between him and the Italian Government, but it was not long before this turbulent fanatic disregarded the agreement and launched further attacks against the tribes under British protection. In 1908 the British Government decided to withdraw from the interior and to concentrate on the coast ; and two years later all troops were taken away from the country except for the small garrisons at the ports of Berbera, Bulhar, and Zeila. As this policy did not prove to be a success, the principal of coastal concentration was abandoned in 1912 and administration in the interior was gradually resumed. From 1914 desultory fighting continued until 1920, when a combined attack with land and air forces scattered the Mullah and his followers, capturing all his forts and possessions. Thereupon the Mullah fled into Ethiopia where he died in the following year.

In the years which intervened between the death of the Mullah and the Italo-Ethiopian War, conditions in British Somaliland were peaceful except for the ordinary inter-tribal cattle raids which are a hereditary pastime of the Somali people. The chief effects of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia have been a certain anxiety on the part of the British Somali tribes regarding the future of their grazing and watering rights across the frontiers, and the prospects of their trans-frontier trade. There has been a certain fear among tribes accustomed to migrate across the frontier of Italian Somaliland, that the Italian Government might include them in some system of taxation imposed upon Italian Somali tribes—such as grazing, stock, or poll-tax. This is an example of the kind of questions that have to be settled on all the British and Anglo-Egyptian frontiers with Italian East Africa. In Berbera there is a natural desire to profit from the increased trade across the frontier, and it is obvious that the presence of a European administration in Ethiopia will bring a permanent benefit to the trade of the Protectorate. In the Burao district the Somalis attach

great importance to the Anglo-Italian settlement regarding their grazing rights south of the frontier. Meanwhile, the British Somali attitude towards disarmament has been considerably improved by the firm stand taken by the Italian authorities against the presence in occupied territory of armed tribesmen, and by the efforts of the British Somali authorities to enforce the registration of rifles. At the time when there was a general shortage of foodstuffs in the territories occupied by the Italians, a good many Arabs, Indians, and Somalis tried to profit from the retail trade in these areas; but the Italian regulations prohibiting the export of lire made this trade difficult.

In the neighbourhood of Hargeisa the tribes also became unsettled owing to the uncertainty as to the future of their grazing and watering rights, but this is being regulated as a result of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, if it was not already settled by the Somaliland Agreement of 1937.¹ Here also there was a rush to make profit out of the arrival of the Italians. When Jijiga was first occupied, every small trader who could obtain goods and the necessary transport went there at full speed and sold them to the troops at enormous profit. Although this trade diminished as a result of Italian restrictions, export by small traders continued to a considerable extent. Many inhabitants of British Somaliland who never thought of trading before, were taking caravans over the frontier and doing well. When, however, the Italian supply services became organized, the demand was reduced to such articles as could not be obtained from Italian sources. The Italian demand for English cigarettes usually ensures a steady flow of 'the more popular brands' over the frontiers of British Somaliland and the Sudan. While some districts of British Somaliland were not affected at all by the arrival of the Italians, those mentioned and the district of Zeila became unsettled owing to tribal anxiety on the one hand and the desire

¹ *Vide* Chapter XI.

of traders to profit on the other. Certainly the new situation in Ethiopia caused a marked improvement in trade in the district of Zeila.

The Protectorate is administered by the Governor without any Executive or Legislative Council. While the headquarters of the Government are at Sheikh, most of the departments have their offices at Berbera. There are five districts—Berbera, Burao, Erigavo, Hargeisa, and Zeila—each of which is in charge of a District Officer. The military garrison normally consists of the Somaliland Camel Corps, King's African Rifles, with headquarters at Burao and a detachment at Hargeisa ; and there is also a varying representation of the Royal Air Force based on Aden. The peace strength of the garrison is 405 officers and men, with a reserve of 150 men, and 558 officers and other ranks of the Somaliland Police. Education has made little headway, although there are Koranic schools at the principal centres. The fact that there are only three Somali boys being educated at Gordon College in Khartoum, shows that the natives are not sufficiently advanced to participate in the government of the country to any extent. It is, therefore, a question of the District Officers carrying out the policy of the Governor through the tribal chiefs as far as possible, and by more direct methods where this is not practicable. In a country where almost the whole population is nomadic, administration chiefly consists of maintaining peace among the tribes, regulating their movements, and preventing crime. Besides this, attention has to be paid to public health, housing of the natives in the towns, and veterinary services. Owing to the fact that the natives make their living chiefly from live-stock, veterinary services are of the greatest importance. Hitherto frontier control and the supervision of the trade and transit over the land frontiers has been difficult owing to the absence of any proper form of government in Ethiopia. Now these difficulties are being gradually removed, and it is hoped that they will completely disappear when the terms of

the Anglo-Italian Agreement have been fully carried out.

There are no railways in British Somaliland, and all transport is by road. The roads, of which there are about 2,000 miles, are little more than desert tracks suitable for vehicles of medium weight with a carrying capacity of two tons. As in the Sudan, they are subject to weather conditions and are often impassable in the rainy seasons. The main commercial routes are from Berbera to Jijiga via Hargeisa, and from Berbera to Erigavo via Burao; and here the motor traffic has increased in recent years. At present the Italian transit through British Somaliland is small; but, now that the Anglo-Italian Agreement has become operative, there will be more incentive to push on with things in this quarter. When the port works have been completed, and the roads selected for Italian transit are made fit for heavier traffic, it is expected that a certain amount of transit from the Harar district will use this route.

Of the ports the only two worth mentioning are Berbera and Zeila. The harbour of Berbera lies within a low sandy spit extending westward for nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and gives complete shelter from all but westerly winds. At the pier-head there is a depth of 10 feet of water at high tide, but so far there are no harbour works worth mentioning. Zeila, which has several times been suggested as a possible port for increased traffic, is situated on a low sandy spit almost level with the sea, and is difficult to reach owing to the coral reefs. Its only merit as a possible port lies in the fact that it possesses a pier suitable for dhows at high tide, while ships of 2,000 to 3,000 tons can get within two miles of the shore. The town consists of a few ramshackle houses and a narrow little street with, at a reasonable distance, the District Officer's house in front of which is an ancient cannon and a modern flag-staff. Otherwise there is nothing but sun, sand, a coating of salt, one or two straggling palm trees, and some camels. In normal times there is a weekly service of small steamers



ADDIS ABABA, PIAZZA VITTORIO



ADDIS ABABA. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING



ITALIAN EAST AFRICA BRIDGE BUILDING

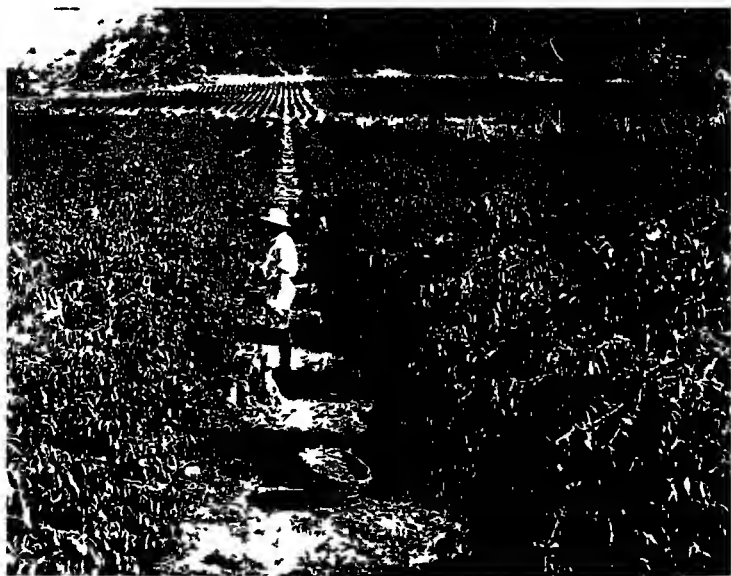


Photo 10 1

ITALIAN EAST AFRICA

between Berbera and Aden, and sailings are arranged to connect with the P. & O. outward and homeward-bound mails. But, as the port of Berbera is improved to meet the needs of Italian transit, it is expected that more Italian ships will make Berbera a regular port of call.

Agriculture in British Somaliland is chiefly confined to the western half of the Protectorate, where the main crops cultivated are sorghum and maize; but gram, barley, and an Ethiopian variety of wheat are also grown. As there are no plantations owned or managed by Europeans, all efforts to improve native agriculture have to be carried out by the Government. Hitherto the agricultural products of the country have been more or less insignificant, but there are certain products which could be exploited if the country wakes up as a result of the Italian transit. It has been suggested that coffee could be grown in certain districts where conditions are somewhat similar to those of the Harar district of Ethiopia, which is known to produce some of the finest coffee in the world. There is also a certain kind of fibre which has always been used by the Somalis for the making of camel ropes. As this fibre, though cleaned by primitive methods, brings a good price in the London market, it should be even more acceptable when treated by up-to-date methods. It is classed with the best sisal hemp, the plant is common throughout the country, and the supply is said to be practically unlimited. There are also in the higher localities some timber resources that might be utilized, and there are districts on the coast and in the interior where tobacco can be grown.

Agriculture is usually said to offer poor prospects owing to the scantiness of the water supply; yet the country is by no means waterless. There are many permanent springs, especially in the more hilly districts, and some of these are now being utilized. But more might be done to make use of these springs, and to build dams in stock-raising areas for the improvement of

conditions for grazing and cultivation. It is possible that with careful preservation and regulation of the existing water supply, agricultural production could be transformed from an almost negligible quantity to quite fair dimensions. When the whole question of making the best use of the water resources of North-East Africa comes to be considered, there should be an opportunity for British Somaliland to derive benefit.

The principal wealth of British Somaliland comes from the large quantity of livestock belonging to the natives. In most parts of the country there is good grazing, and the camel is by far the most important domestic animal. Camel's milk is one of the chief articles of diet among the Somalis, and the meat is eaten on occasions. The Somali camel is also an excellent beast of burden, and can travel for nine hours a day for several days in succession with a 300-lb. load. But, curiously enough, the natives never ride their camels although they make excellent mounts. There are also considerable herds of cattle, which are confined to the Golis range and the neighbouring hills to the west of Sheikh. These are of the small-horned, or hornless Zebu variety (cattle with a hump) which give a fair supply of milk but are inferior to the Ethiopian breed. There are kept to provide the *ghee*, or clarified butter, which is consumed in considerable quantities by the inhabitants of the coastal regions. Live animals are exported to Aden and Suez, while most of the hides go to Aden. But as the cattle are always reduced to poor condition by want of water and grazing in the dry season, they will never be able to compete in the production of meat with the quality of the Arussi cattle of Ethiopia. The sheep are of the black-faced and fat-tailed variety, and form the chief food of the Somalis. They are exported in considerable quantities for the use of the British garrison at Aden. They have little wool and are never shorn, but their thin variety of skin brings a good price in Europe and America for the manufacture of gloves. There is also a trade in goat skins, which are

exported for the manufacture of *glacé* kid shoes and for bookbinding.

Although coal does exist in British Somaliland, and there have been rumours of the possibility of finding gold, neither of these minerals can be taken seriously. Oil has been found about twenty-eight miles south of Berbera, and has been used by the native population ; but there is no reason to believe that it will be found in any quantities in British Somaliland any more than in Ethiopia. At the same time, the mineral investigations in this part of the world are now likely to be much more thorough than they have ever been before, and there is always a possibility of surprise discoveries in a region where oil undoubtedly exists. What is probably of more importance to British Somaliland, is the possession of considerable quantities of limestone at a time when there is great building activity across the frontier in Ethiopia. There is limestone at Diredawa at no great distance from the Somali frontier, but there should be possibilities of export to some parts of a country where cement is so urgently needed.

From the foregoing description it will be seen that the resources of British Somaliland are distinctly meagre, but that there are opportunities of development to some extent by the introduction of modern means of transport and by turning the resources of the country to the best use. The opening up of the transit routes from Jijiga to Burao and Hargeisa should provide the country with a stable source of revenue, while at the same time encouraging local trade across the frontier. It is also possible that, as developments take place in the Ogaden, trade and transit will increase between the centres of this desert region and their natural outlet on the coast of the Gulf of Aden.

But the greatest value of the British Somaliland Protectorate to the British Empire is due to its strategical position as the African counterpart of Aden, commanding the southern entrance to the Red Sea, and as a country suitable in some ways as an air base. For the same

reasons as Britain defends the Suez Canal with a British garrison in Egypt, she defends the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb with the fortified island of Perim, the fortifications and garrison of Aden, and by holding British Somaliland. Although the number of troops in British Somaliland is usually small, they can be quickly reinforced from Aden and from India ; while aircraft can reach Berbera or Zeila in about an hour's flight from Aden.

Situated at the southern entrance of the Red Sea, French Somaliland commands all the trade routes that pass through the Suez Canal. It is a small, round-shaped territory with a large chip out of it—known as the Gulf of Tajura. On the north side of the gulf are the small towns of Tajura and Obok ; on the south side is the port of Jibuti. The coast of the gulf is precipitous, and in places along the north shore the cliffs are from 100 to 400 feet in height. There are various headlands and bays which provide anchorages, although most of these can only be used in certain winds. The best of these anchorages is Etoile, where large vessels are sheltered from all winds. The Bay of Jibuti is protected from the west and north and affords excellent anchorage, while the gulf in general has deep water close to the shore and few coral reefs. The interior of French Somaliland is a broken mountainous country almost without vegetation. The country is forbidding in every respect and has little value of any kind. Indeed the whole reason for the existence of French Somaliland is the port of Jibuti, as the terminus of Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway and as a place of considerable strategic importance to France.

There are two distinct native races inhabiting this colony known as the *Côte Française des Somalis*. The Issa Somalis occupy the country south of the Gulf of Tajura, and of a line running in a south-westerly direction from the western end of the gulf to the Ethiopian frontier ; while the Danakil occupy the rest of the country as well as a considerable area in the deserts of eastern Eritrea

and Ethiopia. The language of both the Danakil and the Issa Somalis is derived from Galla with many words borrowed from Arabic. Migrations are unknown except in so far as the native inhabitants, being nomad shepherds, move frequently from one part of the country to another. Ethiopians and Gallas come to the coast every year to trade, but seldom remain more than a few weeks. In Jibuti the native population consists of a mixture of Danakil, Somalis, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Indians. Most of the Arabs come from the Yemen to work in connexion with the railway and the port, or as market gardeners at the oasis of Ambuli, but few of them have any intention of settling in the country. In the town of Obok, which was formerly the capital, the natives are almost entirely Danakil, and the same applies to Tajura. At Gobad, situated on the frontier of Italian East Africa, the inhabitants are practically all Somalis. There are no other towns in the country and scarcely any villages. As the Somalis mainly belong to the coastal region, they are fairly strict in their observance of the Moslem religion ; but, owing to the small size of the French territory and the influence of the railway, there is little Moslem fanaticism to cause difficulties such as have arisen periodically in British and Italian Somalilands. The European population is practically all concentrated in Jibuti. There are about 1,000 Europeans altogether, nearly all of whom are French, the remainder being made up chiefly of Greek merchants and hotel proprietors.

French activity on the Somali coast dates from 1856, when the consular agent at Aden received instructions to inquire into the possibility of securing territory for a French station in the region of Aden. He suggested the acquisitions of Obok, which was handed over to France with its adjacent plain in 1862 as a result of a treaty concluded with the Danakil chiefs. Two years later a survey of the harbour was made, but France was too preoccupied with other interests to give any attention to the Somali coast. There was no revival of French activity

in this region until 1883, when French action was prompted by two considerations. The occupation of Assab by Italy made it possible that the trade with Ethiopia, which was the main object of interest, might fall permanently into Italian hands. Also, France in her war with Tonkin found a coaling station desirable, as she was denied coaling facilities at Aden on grounds of neutrality. In 1884 a treaty was made with the Sultan of Gobad, who placed his foreign relations under French control ; and an agreement was reached with the Sultan of Tajura, who was persuaded to hand over his territory lying south of that previously ceded by the Danakil chiefs. While in the treaty with the Danakil chiefs France made a payment of 50,500 francs, in the agreement with the Sultan of Tajura she merely undertook not to interfere with the laws of the country.

Although the Sultan of Tajura made this arrangement with France in spite of a previous agreement with the East India Company not to make treaties with any foreign power without consulting the Government of Aden, no protest was made by the British Government. Indeed, French policy continued unchecked, and acts of surrender by the Sultans of Tajura and Gobad were followed by the acceptance of a Protectorate by the latter potentate and by the chiefs of the Issa Somalis. These accessions were consolidated in 1885 by the formation of a Colony at Obok and a Protectorate over Tajura and the adjacent territories. In 1888 the French and British Governments agreed upon a boundary line between their Protectorates.

Fortunately for France the Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia was at this time most anxious to rid himself of the restriction on his freedom of action resulting from the quasi-Protectorate claimed by Italy under the Treaty of 1889. He therefore displayed readiness to make use of French support against the possibility of further Italian encroachments. In 1892 the headquarters of the French administration was transferred from Obok to Jibuti, while

Menelik offered to construct a series of wells along the trade route which he wanted to see established to the latter port. As the Emperor's dislike for Italy increased, Franco-Ethiopian relations became more cordial; and Russia showed her support of France by sending, in 1895, an exploring expedition to Obok with instructions to proceed to Ethiopia at the time when she was at war with Italy. When the Adua campaign came to an end and Italy renounced her claim to a Protectorate, the way was clear for Franco-Ethiopian co-operation. Concessions were accordingly granted in 1894 permitting a Swiss engineer and a French explorer to construct a railway connecting Ethiopia with Jibuti, while France authorized the construction of that portion of the line which was to run through French Somaliland.¹ The railway company, which was formed in 1896 under the name of the *Compagnie Imperiale des Chemins de fer Ethiopiens*, made slow progress against great difficulties, and during 1901 it came to the end of the 18 million francs of capital which it had raised. Here the French Government stepped in to prevent the enterprise falling into foreign hands, and guaranteed a subvention of 500,000 francs for a period of fifty years. By the end of 1902 the line was completed as far as Diredawa.

It was obvious that the completion of the railway from Diredawa to Addis Abeba, and from there to the White Nile, as contemplated in the Concession of 1894, would seriously affect interests other than those of France. In 1902 Great Britain obtained from the Emperor Menelik the right to build a railway through Ethiopian territory to connect Uganda with the Sudan. Two years later she obtained a further concession for the construction of a railway from Somaliland to the Sudan. But Menelik, in accordance with the spirit of the Concession of 1894, allowed the French company to proceed with the line to Addis Abeba, leaving the terms to be settled later. Meanwhile, Italy was anxious to set up railway communi-

¹ *Vide* Chapters XI and XIII.

cation between Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. The result was that the Emperor, pestered by the diplomatic representatives of the three Powers, declared that if they could not find agreement among themselves he would undertake the completion of the railway on his own initiative.

Finally, a compromise was reached in the Agreement of 1906, which asserted the intention of the three Powers to preserve the *status quo* in Ethiopia ; and, if it were disturbed, to co-operate in order to safeguard (a) the interest of Great Britain and Egypt in the Nile basin, more especially as regards the regulation of the waters of that river and its tributaries (due consideration being paid to local interests), without prejudice to Italian interests mentioned in paragraph (b) ; (b) the interest of Italy in Ethiopia as regards Eritrea and Somaliland (including the Benadir), more especially with reference to the hinterland of her possessions, and to the territorial connection between them to the west of Addis Abeba ; and (c) the interests of France in Ethiopia as regards the French Protectorate on the Somali coast, the hinterland of this Protectorate, and the zone necessary for the construction and working of the railway from Jibuti to Addis Abeba. It was agreed that the line to Addis Abeba should be continued by the French company ; that the French Government was to secure the appointment of British, Italian, and Ethiopian representatives on the board of directors ; that all nations should receive identical treatment as regards trade and transit on the railway and at Jibuti. A branch line to Harar was also sanctioned, but it has never been constructed. The British right to undertake any construction west of Addis Abeba was conceded, as well as the right to use the concession for a line from British Somaliland to the Sudan after arrangement with France and Italy. The Italian right to join the Benadir coast and Eritrea was admitted, subject to similar conditions as to the constitution of the directorate and equality of treatment. While

none of these latter projects were carried out, the concession for the French railway was transferred to a new company known as the *Chemin de fer Franco-Ethiopien de Jibuti à Addis-Abeba*. Work then continued steadily in the building of the railway to Addis Abeba, and the line was practically completed by 1915, although it was not opened for full use till 1917.

The length of the line now in operation is 492 miles, of which only 56 miles are in French territory ; and the total cost of construction involved a capital outlay of about £4,000,000. Yet during the year 1915, when only 382 miles were open for traffic, the profits exceeded the expenses by no less than 1,700,000 francs. The railway is a metre-gauge single line, with stiff gradients, only capable of taking trains consisting of a few coaches, but the service given was quite sufficient for the conditions prevailing before the Italo-Ethiopian War. At that time the journey from Jibuti to Addis Abeba took either two or three days according to whether the train was an ordinary one or a so-called 'express.' Travellers by the ordinary train spent one night in a hotel at Diredawa and were devoured by mosquitoes. The following night they spent in a rest-house at Awash, and were warned not to leave the railway station for fear of being eaten by leopards ! Those who chose the 'express' service had only to cope with the mosquitoes at Diredawa. Yet, considering the conditions in which this line operated, travel at that time was by no means unpleasant except for the intense heat in the desert regions. The traffic in those days chiefly consisted of Ethiopian imports of European products, and the export of coffee, hides, and skins. The passengers were mostly traders, occasional travellers, and members of the Diplomatic Corps of the Ethiopian capital.

With the occupation of Ethiopia by the Italians in 1936, the strain put on this railway was much heavier than that for which it was originally intended. At the request of the Italian authorities the French company

increased the carrying capacity to 800 tons a day, and efforts were being made to raise this to 1,200 tons a day, when the Italians decided to transfer the greater part of their traffic to Massawa. The result of this has been a great drop in the railway traffic returns involving the company in serious financial loss. While the passenger traffic has been maintained, the imports to Ethiopia by this route have decreased considerably, and the exports have been reduced to almost nothing. Yet there is no doubt that this is the most efficient and satisfactory means of transport for the whole of central Ethiopia, especially for the carriage of heavy freight needed for colonial development, and the French seem to be prepared to meet the Italians in any reasonable proposals for railway improvement and the adjustment of freight charges. Meanwhile, at a time when development projects are creating favourable conditions for railway traffic, the tonnage now being carried by this line scarcely amounts to one-quarter of its present capacity.

Although the railway is apparently the most important feature of French Somaliland, there are a certain number of other questions demanding the attention of the civil administration. This is based on the French system prevailing in West Africa, where a Governor is assisted by a Council of Administration which must be consulted on financial matters. As is usual in French Colonial possessions, the finance of this small territory is under the strict control of a Treasury staff, which is to a large extent independent of the Governor. Although legislative power actually rests with the French Government in Paris or with the President of the Republic, the Governor has a wide power of issuing *arrêts* which serve many of the purposes of laws. The chief function of the administration is in the nature of political supervision of the native tribes, who are allowed to settle their own internal affairs to a considerable extent according to their own traditions and customs. The natives receive primary education, consisting of instruction in the French language and the

usual subjects, while professional education is also given to prepare youths for posts in the Government service. There is a sprinkling of senior French officials in most of the departments, but the duties delegated to natives and half-castes are often unsuitable for them to perform. Most of the police are natives, as well as many of the passport and other officials with whom the traveller has to deal. The consequence is that the attitude of the native officials towards Europeans has become objectionable and is in many cases insulting. Since the arrival of the Italians temporary prosperity has caused the local inhabitants to become out of hand, and in arguments with Europeans they feel they can rely on the support of native officials.

Jibuti is one of the hottest places in the Red Sea, but before the Ethiopian War conditions were not unpleasant for a place of this kind. There was a constant coming and going of small groups of Europeans, and moonlight supper parties among the palm trees of the Ambuli oasis helped to reduce the length of the stifling nights. As there are no colonists or industries worthy of mention in French Somaliland, Jibuti has always depended on the Ethiopian traffic by means of the railway. The arrivals and departures of the trains were the most important events of the week. On these occasions the little seaport sprang to life until the strange variety of passengers had either gone aboard a ship bound for Europe or taken their seats in the train for Addis Abeba. The town then relapsed again into an atmosphere of Somalis, camels, and a few motor cars.

Soon after the Italians had occupied Addis Abeba the use of Jibuti for the transit of large quantities of Italian supplies completely changed the whole life of the town. The hotels became packed to overflowing ; prices rose to a high level ; the natives got out of hand ; and everybody was making money by honest or dishonest means. As many Italian ships were calling at Jibuti, the activity of the port was greatly increased, and the natives were

charging exorbitant rates for transit to and from the ships. The Greek hotel proprietors made fortunes by giving bad accommodation and worse food to passing travellers. The great deficiency, however, was that both the port and the railway were designed to meet the needs of the small traffic of the days before the Italo-Ethiopian War. The ships had to lie at anchor in the bay, and there was only a small jetty for motor launches and rowing-boats. Neither the railway nor the port were in any way suitable to handle the greatly increased traffic of the Italians. Yet both the French and the natives found the increased transit activity most profitable, especially after the Italians supplemented the railway with road transport and streams of lorries arrived daily from Addis Abeba.

Meanwhile, the building of the road from Massawa to Addis Abeba was going ahead, and the Italians were beginning to build a new port at Assab, with a road running through the Danakil Desert to Dessié. They found the transit dues at Jibuti a heavy burden which they resented, and they wanted to have their own ports of access at Massawa and Assab. As soon as the Massawa-Addis Abeba road was finished, almost all the Italian traffic was diverted to this route. This flight of prosperity has been serious for Jibuti, which depends for its very life on the railway, and it looks as if French Somaliland will become a burden on the French Treasury unless some understanding is reached with the Italians. Yet, with faith in the future of Jibuti, the French are going ahead with improvements to the port, with a view to providing berthing facilities for three vessels, and the necessary harbour works and equipment. In 1935, 478 vessels entered the harbour of Jibuti with a tonnage of 1,962,193 tons, but the number of ships calling has been considerably increased in the last few years.

While the commercial value of French Somaliland in itself is due almost entirely to the fact that Jibuti is the terminus of the Addis Abeba railway, this territory is of much greater significance to France from an imperial

point of view. Jibuti is a half-way house and a coaling station on the line of communications between France and her possessions in India, Indo-China, China, and Madagascar. French Somaliland is, therefore, territory of a high strategical value, and Jibuti is to France what Aden is to Britain.

CHAPTER XI

ITALY AND HER AFRICAN NEIGHBOURS

A DESCRIPTION has now been given of the different countries which go to make up North-East Africa, and an attempt has been made to outline some of the leading questions with which these countries have to deal. It now remains to consider to what extent these countries can co-operate for their mutual benefit, and in what ways co-operation is most desirable. In doing so I propose to deal first with relations between Italian East Africa and the countries by which she is actually surrounded, and then to say something about Italian relations with Egypt. The Anglo-Italian Agreement provides for a settlement between Great Britain and Italy with regard to Italian East Africa, while the *Bon Voisinage* Agreement between Great Britain, Egypt, and Italy harmonizes British, Italian, and Egyptian interests in the frontier districts of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Kenya, and British Somaliland. Unfortunately, no agreement has yet been reached to settle the differences between Italy and France, and the Italians have even gone so far as to renounce the Franco-Italian Agreement of 1935, which at the time held out prospects of a lasting settlement. Until the differences between France and Italy are settled it is impossible to reach anything approaching full co-operation in North-East Africa, but this is no reason why there should be any delay in putting into full execution the agreements already reached between Britain, Italy, and Egypt.

The Italian case with regard to French Somaliland in general, and Jibuti in particular, appears as unreasonable to the French as it appears reasonable to the Italians, and

it looks as if both sides had strong cases differing widely in fundamental aspects of the question. French Somaliland is French territory of a highly strategical value, and we have seen that Jibuti is to France what Aden is to Britain. It is a half-way house on her line of communication with Madagascar and her Far-Eastern possessions. Jibuti is, therefore, a vital point in the French imperial system. But to Italy, now in possession of Ethiopia, Jibuti has the appearance of a French 'toll-gate' on her imperial communications. This makes the Italians feel that the Empire's front door is not her own. If the Jibuti question by itself constitutes a grievance to the Italians, this is aggravated by the high dues of the Suez Canal Company. In these two obstacles, material as well as financial, Italy sees France twice astride the vital communications with her new Empire.

As long as Ethiopia was a semi-barbarous State, the position of French Somaliland and Jibuti was advantageous to both sides ; but, with a first-class European Power in possession of the vast hinterland, this position has been entirely altered. Italian East Africa is Italy's only colonial possession of real value, and it means a great deal to all Italians. It is therefore not surprising that they resent a foreign Power having an economic stranglehold over its principal outlet. It is perhaps easier to realize the position if we think of it in terms of the British Empire. How would we like Capetown and the railway to Johannesburg in the hands of a foreign Power ?

To the French this part of the Somali Coast is French territory of considerable importance which depends economically on the transit by the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway. The railway belongs to a French company chiefly financed by French capital, and this line was constructed in the face of great difficulties both of a political and technical nature. During the last quarter of a century the company has not only repaid the 17 million gold francs it cost to build, but has produced handsome profits for the shareholders. Out of a total holding of 34,500 shares the French Government hold

17,500; the previous Ethiopian Government 4,600; and the Italians acquired 2,500 in accordance with the Franco-Italian Agreement of 1935. The remaining shares are in the hands of French investors who are disinclined to part with them. Before the Italo-Ethiopian War the freight charges and fares for passengers were exceedingly high, due partly no doubt to the heavy expenses and small traffic. But after the occupation of Addis Abeba by the Italians an arrangement was reached on the basis of the increased traffic.

In 1937 Italy, practically the only user of the railway, paid £482,952 in rates for passengers and goods, while the running costs of the railway amounted to £247,923. In the port of Jibuti the Italians have to pay an assortment of dues, amounting in 1937 to approximately £231,250. The dues paid by the Italians in that year for access to their own territory amounted to £714,202. When this is added to £1,896,500 for Suez Canal dues (passengers and tonnage) in 1937, the total is over 2½ millions.

The French regard the present arrangement as quite a reasonable one in harmony with the system at other French ports, and maintain that it is not their fault that Italy occupied Ethiopia and now finds this outlet a financial embarrassment. The Italians, on the other hand, hold the view that, as by far the greater part of the railway runs through their territory, they should either have complete control of it or hold the greater part of the shares. They object to having to pay foreigners for traffic over the natural transit route for the whole of central Ethiopia, especially where payment has to be made in foreign currency. But there is also a strong psychological factor, which has long been the bugbear of Franco-Italian relations. It is due to the unfortunate attitude of the one towards the other, arising out of the Latin failure to understand and be in sympathy with those having to face a different set of difficulties under entirely different conditions.

When the Italians began their campaign in Ethiopia

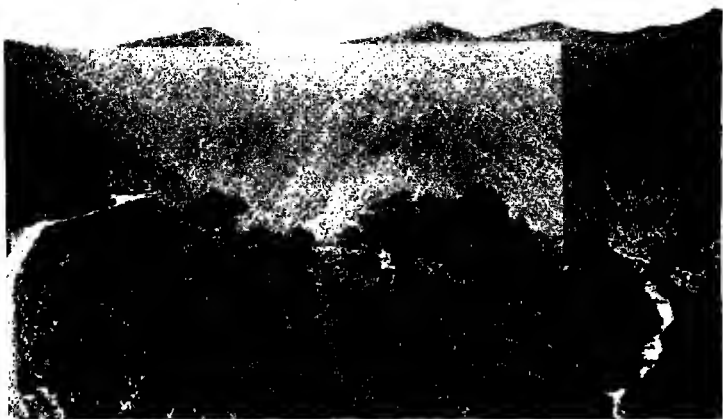


Photo: Miss K. Scott-Moncrieff

THE SHEIKH PASS, BRITISH SOMALILAND

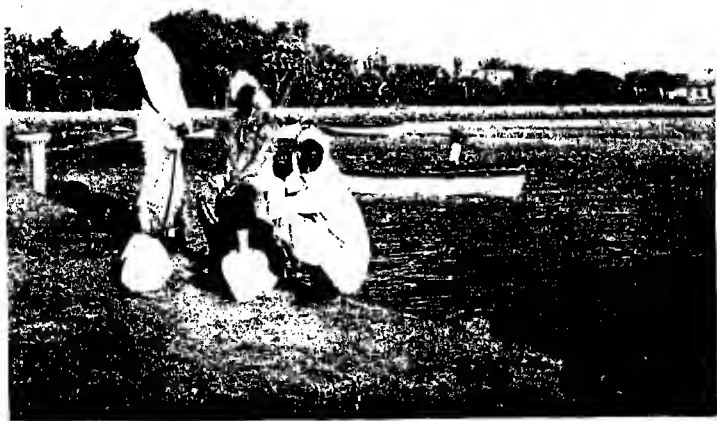


Photo: Miss K. Scott-Moncrieff

BERBERA, BRITISH SOMALILAND
THE CUSTOMS WHARF



JIBUTI ADDIS ABABA RAILWAY

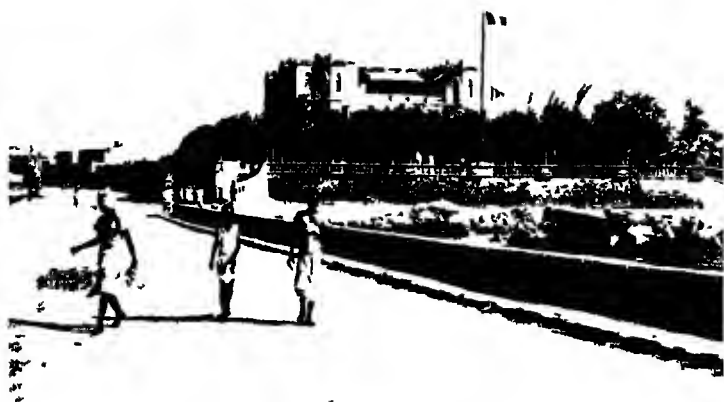


Photo Me sagatus Mar 11

JIBUTI. GOVERNOR'S PALACE

they signed the 1935 Agreement by which France agreed to cede a strip of French Somaliland adjoining Eritrea and commanding the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb ; France also recognized Italian sovereignty over Dumeira, an island in those Straits whose ownership had long been a subject of contention. Although the island in question had never been occupied by French garrisons, its possession by Italy is of strategical value in view of the changed situation. But neither the territory nor the island have yet been occupied by Italian troops, and presumably the renunciation of the Agreement by Italy means that for the present, at any rate, there will be no change. It was, however, neither these territorial concessions nor the increase of Italian shares in the railway company that constituted the chief item of value in so far as the Agreement affected Italy. What really mattered at that time was that France unofficially gave Italy a free hand to pursue her campaign in Ethiopia. Although these French concessions were offset by the arrangement with regard to Tunis,¹ their gain to Italy at that time was of very considerable value. France, therefore, feels that she is under no obligation to Italy with regard to East Africa. The Italians, however, take quite another view of the settlement of accounts. By refusing to recognize the 1935 Agreement they have re-opened the question of their claims in Africa based on the Treaty of London of 1915, which outlined the conditions under which Italy joined the Allies in the Great War. As France only gave Italy small pieces of desert in fulfilment of promises given, Italy now maintains that the account has not been fully paid and wants a settlement to be made in the sphere of Jibuti.

In the last chapter we saw how the railway and port of Jibuti were no longer adequate to deal with the increased Italian traffic ; and how the Italians have transferred their transit almost entirely to the port of Massawa. But, as the purely Italian line of communication via Massawa means that passengers and goods have to travel 775 miles

¹ This has since been renounced by the Italians.

from Addis Abeba by motor transport driven by foreign petrol, the cost of this route has become a serious problem. Not long ago, the cost of transport for a ton of flour from Jibuti to Addis Abeba by rail was £5 15s. ; and the cost by road from Massawa was £18 4s. Consequently, while flour could be bought in Massawa for £13 a ton, its price in Addis Abeba was over £31. The Italians feel that they are being compelled to use an inconvenient and expensive route owing to the position at Jibuti and the unhelpful attitude of the French authorities. Yet, in spite of the fact that the French are now taking steps to improve the port of Jibuti to meet changed conditions, and are prepared to do the same with regard to the railway, the Italians also resent this as a sign that France has no intention of giving up Jibuti. Another reason why this French seaport is a thorn in the side of the Italians, is that ever since the Italo-Ethiopian War the town has harboured anti-Italian propagandists of various kinds, who have been most active in sending false news to the European Press. It is no exaggeration to say that in recent years by far the greater proportion of reports unfavourably misrepresenting conditions in Italian East Africa have come from Ethiopian, Communist, Socialist, and other anti-Fascist agents in Jibuti. The whole object of these individuals has been to make political capital out of Italian difficulties, real or imaginary. In these circumstances it is not surprising that there is a strong desire on the part of the Italians to rid themselves of this evil once and for all.

While the Italians have no legal claims in respect to this French territory either in whole or in part, and the French are under no obligation to make concessions here, it must be remembered that Italy suffered injustices over what she has received in Africa in recompense for the valuable help she gave to the Allies during the Great War. Also, she finds herself without a natural free outlet to large possessions recently acquired by the only method which offered any hope of satisfying her colonial needs. Her claims rest on a radical change in the local relations of

politics to geography. But this is no reason why France should be asked to give up a key position in her colonial system, unless she receives something of equal value in return or can make some other equally satisfactory arrangement. It has been suggested that Italy might have some other port in this neighbourhood to which the railway might be diverted. The difficulty about this is that Jibuti is the obvious and only suitable port in this part of the Red Sea as an outlet for Ethiopia, and Jibuti without the Ethiopian traffic would be shorn of most of its economic significance. But the French may eventually find it to their advantage to transfer the capital of French Somaliland back to Obok, which is nearer to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. In this way they could strengthen their strategical position to compensate for economic loss. Should France consider this course, Italy might be prepared to give her a piece of southern Eritrea in exchange for the piece of French Somaliland including Jibuti. A settlement on these lines would simply mean moving French Somaliland up the coast to make room for an Italian outlet at Jibuti. But, if France is asked to make sacrifices in the general interest, Britain should be prepared to make similar concessions equal in value.

While there is little doubt what Italy wants, it is most difficult to foresee what kind of settlement will eventually be reached in this question. In the situation in which she is now placed, Italy quite naturally would like to possess the whole of French Somaliland and have complete control of the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway. Her aims are strategical as well as economic. As the French have no intention of making such territorial concessions to Italy, the only solution seems to lie in some form of compromise, such as an Italian free zone in the port of Jibuti, and greater control in the railway, which might even be bought outright. Although a solution on these lines cannot be regarded as satisfactory, it would be a step in the right direction, and might well lead to a much more satisfactory arrangement as conditions alter in course of time. One cannot help feeling that the French would be

wise to make these port and railway concessions in exchange for Franco-Italian co-operation elsewhere as well as in the Red Sea. The Italians would also have much to gain in other ways by reaching a working agreement with the French, in the hope that later on circumstances will remove some of the obstacles standing in the way of a really satisfactory settlement. It is quite possible that at some future date an Anglo-French-Italian Agreement will be reached, reconciling the interests of the three Powers at the south end of the Red Sea, while at the same time safeguarding vital interests already established in this area by France and Great Britain. But before this can come about some means must be found of guaranteeing equality of rights in the international waterway from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb.

A strong argument in favour of a settlement of the Jibuti question in stages is that it is still too early to appreciate the full value or otherwise of any particular Red Sea port to Italian trade. As time passes, and trade resulting from colonization takes definite direction and shape, it is more than likely that there will be a considerable change in the relative values of the ports. Meanwhile, the progress of Italian East Africa should not be impeded by major disputes with a European Power whose friendly collaboration can be of great value. While the dispute over Jibuti and the railway overshadows such minor questions as frontier delimitation, this frontier difficulty is also present in French Somaliland. During the Italo-Ethiopian War Italian troops used to cross the frontier for the chief reason that they did not know where the frontier was. Now the French, who had never before occupied many of these frontier districts, have advanced their own outposts to what is believed to be the boundary. The result is that small bodies of French and Italian troops sit looking at one another, neither being quite sure in what territory they are posted. In times of tension a situation such as this is difficult enough, and it is fortunate that the nomadic tribes of French Somaliland are not in the habit of migrating across the frontiers.

Although the Franco-Italian situation is at present most unsatisfactory from every point of view, the coming into force of the Anglo-Italian Agreement has cleared the way for a practical settlement of a large assortment of questions in this region. In the protocol of the Anglo-Italian Agreement it was agreed that, immediately after it came into operation, negotiations would be opened to define the boundaries between the Sudan, Kenya, and British Somaliland on the one side, and Italian East Africa on the other ; to settle questions affecting Italian interests as well as those of Britain, Egypt, or the Sudan in these territories, and to stabilize their mutual relations. It was also agreed that these negotiations should include the question of commercial relations between the Sudan and Italian East Africa. In the *Bon Voisinage* Agreement between Great Britain, Egypt, and Italy, the three Powers undertook, ' in addition to proceeding in due course to the discussion of detailed questions connected with the frontiers between Italian East Africa and the Sudan, Kenya and British Somaliland as provided in the Protocol . . . at all times to co-operate for the preservation of good neighbourly relations between the said territories, and to endeavour by every means in their power to prevent raids or other unlawful acts of violence being carried out across the frontiers of any of the above mentioned territories.' Provision was also made to check any attempt to evade the anti-slavery laws, and it was agreed that no party to the Agreement should enrol in bodies of a military nature nationals of any of the other parties. In the Agreement itself the Italians once more reaffirmed their recognition of British interests in the matter of Lake Tana ; gave a reassurance that natives of Italian East Africa would not be compelled to undertake military duties other than local policing and territorial defence ; and agreed to consider the question of British missionaries in Italian territory.

The frontier lines of British Somaliland, Kenya, and the Sudan need in some places to be delimited, in some cases to be demarcated, and in others to be rectified. At

present there are localities where there are working agreements under unsatisfactory conditions. It is most undesirable in the interests of both nations and the native tribes that this should continue, as loose local arrangements of this kind must lead sooner or later to serious irregularities endangering public security on either side of the frontiers. Also, the status of British subjects (chiefly Arab and Indian traders) needs to be stabilized, so that the scope of their commercial activities can be settled and their trade can be carried on without the damaging fear of uncertainty. This forms part of the settlement of commercial relations outlined in the Protocol of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, which provides for the promotion of good commercial relations between Italian East Africa and the British Empire generally.

The question of missionaries awaits decision. At the time of the Italo-Ethiopian War, certain Swedish missionaries indulged in political activities of an anti-Italian nature, and for this all foreign missionaries had to suffer. Although there was no reason to suspect that British missionaries had interfered in such matters which were not their concern, they had to leave the country along with the others. In Italian East Africa the question of missionaries is not an easy one to solve. On the one hand it is contended that European missionaries can give valuable help to the Government owing to their close contact with native races, who think in terms of 'the white man' irrespective of nationality. On the other hand, it is argued that foreign missionaries are a disturbing element among the native peoples, especially if they are Protestants in a country governed by a Catholic Power. There is truth in both these contentions, and it is a mistake to generalize: everything depends on the individual missionaries concerned. The outstanding fact, however, is that the greatest need for work of this kind is on the purely medical side, and that in this direction there is less chance of trouble between the Government and the missionary workers. The present position is that the preaching of Christianity is confined to the purely

pagan districts, which are strictly preserved for the work of Italian Catholic missionaries and priests of the Ethiopian Church. Whether British missionaries will be allowed to return it is impossible to say, but a possible solution may be found in the admission of a limited number of British Catholic missionaries and British Protestant medical missionaries, who would give a formal undertaking to take no part in any political activity.

Then there is the question of Ethiopian refugees, of which there are 150 in the Sudan, 5,000 to 6,000 in Kenya, and 1,300 to 1,400 (including women and children) in British Somaliland. As these people are now being supported at the expense of the Governments concerned, it is important that early steps be taken for their disposal and settlement with adequate guarantees as to their future. The bogey of the Italians trying to create a large 'Black army' in Ethiopia is provided against in the Anglo-Italian Agreement, although such a course would obviously be contrary to the interests of Italian security. The idea of arming large bodies of the native population in a country of this kind would be a highly dangerous experiment. It also remains to be decided by Britain, Italy, and Egypt exactly what is to be done regarding the building of a dam on Lake Tana¹ and such electrical works as the Italians may suggest. But of all outstanding questions the most important is that of a trade agreement between these three countries to facilitate trade and transit between Italian East Africa on the one hand and British Somaliland, Kenya, and the Sudan on the other. This would comprise the regulation and encouragement of trade over the frontiers, the settlement of transit questions and customs dues, and the finding of at least a temporary solution of the currency difficulty already outlined.

While French Somaliland is all port and no hinterland, British Somaliland is generally speaking all hinterland and very little in the way of ports. Yet the Italians have shown a desire to use the British Somali ports, and to have transit facilities through British territory. Hence in

¹ *Vide* Chapter VII.

1937 an agreement was reached between the British and Italian Governments for the use of the ports of Berbera and Zeila and for transit over the roads of British Somaliland. This agreement, which came into force on 1 March 1937 for a period of two years, has been renewed by mutual agreement. The roads to be opened up for transit are Berbera-Hargeisa-Jijiga, Zeila-Burao-Jijiga, and Zeila-Aisha. It was agreed that these roads should be made suitable for the traffic contemplated at all times of the year under normal conditions, and the ports of Berbera and Zeila should be made available to Italian shipping. These two ports will eventually be able to handle 200 tons and 50 tons per day respectively of ordinary goods. No custom dues are to be charged, but a small *ad valorem* tax on transit will be levied. Facilities are to be given to Italian firms engaged in the transit trade, but local native labour has to be employed. While this agreement will be of considerable benefit to Italy, it will also be of appreciable value to British Somaliland when the harbour works at Berbera are completed and it comes into full operation. As the Zeila outlet has proved impracticable, such traffic as now passes through the Protectorate takes the route from Jijiga through Hargeisa to Berbera.

Meanwhile, steps have already been taken as a result of this agreement to fix grazing rights in some of the frontier districts, where five or six tracks have been arranged for migratory tribes. It remains to settle the frontier, making allowance, for example, for tribes dependent on the State of Harar but spending a part of the year in British Somaliland. The negotiations in Berbera leading to these results were typical of the good feeling that exists between British and Italian officials in this part of Africa. While there is no doubt that transit by motor vehicles will increase considerably by the routes above mentioned, there is also likely to be an increase in native trade by camel caravans with parts of the Ogaden and Italian Somaliland. The setting up of properly established posts on both sides of the frontier where these

caravans pass will bring this trade completely under control for the benefit of the British and Italians alike. Also, adequate policing on the Italian side should serve as a new check to lawlessness among the tribes in the south of British Somaliland.

In the relations between Italian East Africa and Kenya there is a good deal to be done both on the political and economic sides. While the frontier between Kenya and Italian Somaliland was demarcated in 1925 (when Jubaland was handed over to Italy) the northern frontier of Kenya with Ethiopia badly needed revision and demarcation. At Moyale, for instance, the British and Italian posts are separated by a small ravine in the middle of a bush country, but there is no definite frontier line. Maps differ as to the frontier, Menelik's line being quoted by some people and refuted by others. Hence difficulties occur almost daily with native troops, traders, and migratory tribes. Although good relations between the frontier officials make the position easier than it would otherwise be, the situation is most unsatisfactory. In Kenya the refugee question is acute, and their passage over the frontier gave rise to incidents.

Of the trade routes between Kenya and the Italian territories, Moyale is the most important. As both are agricultural countries of an African type, the trade is parallel rather than complementary and consequently small. It consists chiefly of raw skins, coffee, cattle and sheep, goats, salt, oil seeds, cotton (from Italian Somaliland), and miscellaneous products. With the construction of roads, the Italians hope to supply products for European consumption; and, owing to the great variety of crops that can be grown in different altitudes of Italian East Africa, they expect to build up an export trade to Kenya in some of these products. Also, as they are making an extensive study of what has been done in Kenya for the breeding of cattle and sheep, they hope to increase the exchange of live-stock for breeding and other purposes. Whether there will be any traffic of importance between the port of Mombasa

and Italian East Africa remains to be seen, but it is significant that there has for some time been talk in Italian official circles about this route. This is presumably in view of the possibility of increased trade with South Africa ; but here, as elsewhere, the need of better roads must be met before transit of any real consequence can materialize. It is to be hoped that the quality of the roads built by the Italians in Ethiopia will induce the authorities in Kenya to raise the standard of road communications throughout that country.

Before passing on to the area of the transit routes between Italian East Africa and the Sudan, it is as well to mention a region in the extreme south-west of Ethiopia, where centres such as Magi and Gardulla are important for trade across the Kenya and Sudan frontiers. These centres are far from the Nile and from the railways of Kenya and Uganda ; but a large and uncontrolled trade has long been conducted in this remote area, and it should increase with the development of these districts and the improvement of roads. The frontier lines in this area are vague, and these districts have not only been grossly misgoverned in the past, but have provided a battle-ground for the Murille and Donyiro of Ethiopia on the one side, and the Turkana of Kenya on the other. Moreover, the peoples of these districts have been in the habit of using the Sudanese province of Mongalla as a base for raids into Kenya and the Sudan. It is, therefore, of political as well as economic importance to everybody that this part of the country should be opened up for legitimate trading. This is one of the regions where the Italians have encountered a certain amount of trouble ; and this is likely to continue periodically until the frontier is fixed and a system of military control is established on both sides. It is in places such as this that the co-operation of two different European Powers can make a great impression on turbulent natives, especially when one of the Powers is a new arrival. While hitherto tribes of this kind have made use of the backward and corrupt methods of the previous Ethiopian Government, they will now

find themselves hedged in on both sides by disciplined troops and frontier police under European officers.

The Sudan eastern frontier can be divided into four more or less well-defined sections, according to the habits and practices of the local inhabitants. From the Kenya frontier to the Boma Plateau (lat. 6° N.) west of Magi, such population as there is on the Sudan side is chiefly composed of savage pastoral tribes subject to Ethiopia and related to the Turkana of Kenya. Farther north, from the Boma Plateau to the Daga Valley (lat 9° 15' N.), are the Nilotic Nuer and Anuak, who are cattle-owning savages. While other Nuer stay permanently on the Ethiopian side, there are many who have long been accustomed to migrate during the dry season of the year to the Ethiopian side of the frontier-line, which for the greater part is quite unsuitable to local conditions. This marsh-land area is much favoured for inter-tribal fighting. Farther north still, between the Daga Valley and the Dinder River (lat. 12° N.), is the district of Beni Shangul, which became part of Ethiopia in 1897, and has for centuries been ruled by Moslem feudal chiefs who look upon the land on the Sudan side as belonging to them by hereditary right. In Ethiopia the feudal system is no longer legal, but the law makes little or no impression on these predatory chiefs. Lastly, the section between the rivers Dinder and Setit is mainly populated on the Ethiopian side by people who live by various forms of plunder and lawlessness. In these circumstances, Anglo-Italian co-operation is most essential to maintain peace and security along a frontier through which pass the trade routes to the Nile Valley and Sudan railways. But the frontier line itself must be rectified by small exchanges of territory, and properly demarcated throughout its whole length to the mutual satisfaction of the Governments at Khartoum and Addis Abeba. Once this is done, the co-operation of European Powers on either side should bring about a state of tranquillity such as has never before existed in these remote parts.

Another question awaiting regulation with the Italians

is that of the Gambela enclave, where a trading post on the Baro in Ethiopia (known as the Sobat on the Sudan side) was in 1902 leased to the Sudan Government by the Emperor Menelik. When the Italians occupied Gambela, friendly relations were established between the British official of the Sudan Government on the spot and the Italian authorities. The result has been that everything has worked smoothly, in spite of the fact that no official status had been agreed upon regarding this British commercial station. Gambela is a remarkable example of how the British and Italian officials help one another in these remote parts.

Reference has already been made to a small number of Ethiopian refugees who fled over the frontier to the Sudan, and for whom arrangements are necessary. It only remains to mention that in Khartoum there has been a certain amount of anti-Italian propaganda coming from Ethiopian sources. Although the volume of misleading reports from this source has been small and insignificant compared with the steady flow from Jibuti, the settlement of the refugee question is important for this if for no other reason. On the economic side, Italian relations with the Sudan are chiefly concerned with the opening up of transit routes ; the regulation of trade on a satisfactory basis ; and the rationalization of production on both sides of the frontier, so that as far as possible the products of the one may become the complement of the other. But before transit and trade can hold out any prospect of success, an arrangement will have to be reached on the subject of currency and exchange, which has already been dealt with elsewhere.¹ There is also no doubt that the Italians will want to open a branch of one of their banks at Khartoum. The Banco di Roma, with branches in western Ethiopia, has on two occasions applied for permission to operate in the Sudan ; but both requests were refused some time prior to the signing of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. As the business of such a bank

¹ *Vide* Chapter VII and IX.

in Khartoum would be done through the British and Egyptian banks, there seems to be no reason why this facility to trade should not be granted, now that the Agreement has come into force; but the arrangement would have to be reciprocal in the event of the British and Egyptian banks wanting to open branches in Addis Abeba.

Another question which has to be decided concerns Italian consular representation. According to the terms of the Condominium, 'no Consul, Vice-Consul or Consular Agent shall be accredited in respect of, nor allowed to reside in the Sudan, without the previous consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.' The object of this restriction was to ensure British predominance in the Sudan in the interests of the Sudanese, the Egyptians, and Great Britain as vitally interested in the integrity of Egypt, and to do so without giving cause of offence to others. Although the mandatory system was unknown at that time, the regime created by Great Britain in 1899 was very much of the same nature. The question now arises as to whether the British Government will give their consent to Italian Consular representation in Khartoum and elsewhere, or whether some other form of representation will take its place.

One of the more important aspects of economic co-operation is the part that the Sudan can play in the exploitation of the resources of western Ethiopia. We have seen that this large fertile region contains extensive timber resources, including precious woods as well as those suitable for building purposes. While it is presumed that large quantities of the latter will be used for constructional work in connection with colonization and development schemes, there should be abundant supplies of both kinds of timber for export. As an example of how the Sudan can serve Italian East Africa and at the same time benefit herself, an Anglo-Italian company has applied for a concession to exploit the timber resources of the Upper Dadessa Valley. This company proposes to float

the timber down the Blue Nile to Roseires, and to have it cut and worked in the Sudan for export via Port Sudan. This looks like being the first of many enterprises of a similar nature. Other products to which this system may possibly be applied are vegetable fibres, hides and skins for tanning, and rubber obtainable from the *Forbia Candelabra* tree. There undoubtedly will be an increasing opportunity for Italo-foreign concessions of this kind, but everything depends on the restoration of confidence and a greater sense of security. In the matter of cotton production, it may be argued that Italy should agree not to cultivate cotton to compete with the cotton-producing areas of the Sudan ; and that in return the Sudan should agree not to produce some crop which flourishes in Ethiopia. Cotton, however, is one of the raw materials which the Italians specially want for their own consumption ; and it is, therefore, unlikely that they will agree to any such arrangement until their own needs in this respect are fully met.

Another effective way in which co-operation can at present be of mutual benefit is with regard to irrigation and communications. Egypt and the Sudan have long and valuable experience of all questions connected with water supply and its use for cultivation. Italy, on the other hand, has long shown her exceptional capacity in road construction under difficult conditions, and has more recently proved her skill in the arrangement and running of motor transport. In these circumstances there seems to be much benefit to be gained on both sides by each making use of the expert knowledge and experience of the other. As far as water supply and irrigation are concerned, co-operation is essential ; for so many of the water feeders of the Nile system rise and flow for considerable distances through Italian territory. Irrigation engineers from Egypt and the Sudan could give valuable advice to the Italians on using the various sources of water in the mountainous districts for the cultivation of crops. They could also show in what ways Italian control of many of

the sources of Nile water would benefit Egypt and the Sudan. In the matter of road communications, Italian participation in a road-building scheme for the Sudan would be a great help. It would not only ensure expert advice on many technical questions with which the Italians have recently had to deal in their low-lying districts, but would enable the Sudan system to be built up in harmony with its continuation on the other side of the frontier. Reference has already been made to the danger of land erosion in Ethiopia, which would be as damaging to the Italians as it would be to the Egyptians and Sudanese. In order to prevent this, collaboration between experts on both sides seems essential, and it is important that this matter should be comprehensively dealt with before cultivation and the felling of timber begin to take place in the catchment area of the Blue Nile.

While Ethiopian coffee has hitherto been the chief product imported by the Sudan, we have seen that there is not much scope for increasing these imports. This is partly due to a decrease in coffee consumption and partly owing to the fact that Kenya coffee is also consumed in parts of the Sudan. Ethiopian coffee, reaching the Sudan chiefly through Gambela, is consumed in Khartoum, to the west of the Nile, and in the southern districts; but in the districts served by rail from Port Sudan most of the coffee used is from Kenya. In 1937 the Sudan imports of Kenya coffee amounted to £E.64,464, compared with £E.138,855, from Ethiopia. Although Ethiopian coffee is well-known for its flavour and aroma, and is of a high quality suitable for blending with that of Brazil, it has hitherto suffered so much from bad handling in transit as to make large quantities only suitable for native consumption. Yet its market has been maintained in spite of its high price, its greatest fall being 10 per cent, compared with as much as 50 per cent in the case of other coffees. The Italians have, therefore, good reason to hope that, with improved selection, grading, and methods

of transit, this product will secure a good position in the world markets. As any increase in the traffic of coffee over the Sudan frontier is likely to be for re-export through Port Sudan, the part which the Sudan can play is chiefly connected with improved means of transit.

As far as the question of water supply is concerned, Italian relations with Egypt are based on much the same interests as those of the Sudan, the only difference being that the water reaches the Sudan first. As this unchangeable fact of nature has long caused some jealousy in Egypt, the Egyptians are likely to be on a sharp lookout in any transaction between the Sudan and the Italian authorities. It is, therefore, of importance in the interests of good neighbourly relations that Egypt should be given no grounds for complaint that she is not consulted, even in matters which may appear to be insignificant details. As a legally acknowledged equal partner with Britain in the Sudan, she will expect to maintain that position in all dealings with the Italians, especially where water questions are concerned.

Apart from the Italian claims with regard to the Suez Canal, the only point of difference between Italy and Egypt is over the position of the Head of the Ethiopian Church. It has long been the custom for the Ethiopian Abuna, or Head Bishop, to be appointed and consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria. This is represented in the grandiloquent title of this ecclesiastical dignitary, who is known as 'The most holy Pope and Patriarch of the great city of Alexandria and of all the land of Egypt, of Jerusalem, the Holy City, of Nubia, Abyssinia, and Pentapolis, and all the preaching of St. Mark.' But in 1937 Marshal Graziani, then Viceroy of Ethiopia, declared the Coptic Church in Ethiopia to be autocephalous, and appointed an Ethiopian Abuna, three metropolitans, and three bishops for the whole of Italian East Africa.¹ The appointment of a new Abuna of Ethiopian origin is probably due to the old desire of many

¹ *Vide* Chapter VIII.

Ethiopians to have a prelate of their own race, but also to an Italian wish to separate the Christians, especially the great Rases, from the ecclesiastical domination of Egypt.

Although this movement on the part of the Ethiopian Christians was already strong in the days of the ex-Emperor, when a compromise was reached by the appointment of some Ethiopian Bishops, the action taken by the Italians caused widespread consternation in Egypt. Not only were the Egyptian Copts indignant at this breach of ancient tradition, but they had considerable support from the Moslem community. At first sight Egyptian unanimity on such a subject seems strange, especially when the Moslems supported the Christians on a purely Christian issue. The explanation is to be found in the fact that Coptic opposition was ecclesiastical and traditional, while Moslem indignation was largely based on national prestige. But it must also be remembered that Moslem Egypt has an ancient friendship for Christian Ethiopia, on account of hospitality once given to Moslems after the flight from Mecca. Considerations such as these always make a profound impression in a country like Egypt, and any disturbance of long-standing tradition brings about a strong reaction. As, however, there is no prospect of the Egyptians being able to restore the former position of the Head of the Ethiopian Church, a dispute of this sort is almost certain to die a natural though somewhat prolonged death.

The Egyptians need to be on the most friendly terms with the Italians in Africa, and to co-operate with them in any way that is not likely to damage their own interests. Much material benefit is to be gained from full Egyptian participation in the development of North-East Africa; but the Egyptians want to be absolutely sure that Italy has no ulterior designs on Egypt or the Sudan before they commit themselves whole-heartedly.¹ With her heavy commitments

¹ *Vide* Chapter XIII.

in East Africa and in Libya, any supposition that Italy now wants to extend her domains still further is obviously unreasonable. What the distant future may have in store it is impossible for anyone to say.

CHAPTER XII

NEW TRANSIT ROUTES

FROM the description given of the various countries making up North-East Africa and of the geographical features of this region of mountains, desert, and water, it is obvious that transport is a dominating factor. Hitherto the lack of proper means of communication and transport adequate to deal with the great distances has hindered progress in all directions. Although in Egypt and the Sudan the Nile has made cultivation and development possible up to a certain point, the rest of North-East Africa has remained in a more or less primitive state. Now aviation and motor transport are rapidly transforming Ethiopia into a land of progressive development, and this is having a stimulating influence on all the surrounding countries. Just as the former Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland are joining with Ethiopia in the forward move of Italian East Africa, so Italy's new Empire will join with the countries of the Nile in the general development of North-East Africa. It will be impossible, owing to their geographical position, for British and French Somalilands to isolate themselves from this forward movement.

Now that the Anglo-Italian Agreement has become operative, one of the most urgent needs is the opening up of new transit routes to supersede those of the old caravans, and to facilitate trade and transit. The outlets at Massawa, Assab, and the Somali ports are matters for the Italians themselves to arrange, while that of Jibuti is one for international negotiation. As far as Anglo-Italian co-operation is concerned, the question is centred to some extent on the outlets at Berbera and Zeila in

British Somaliland, but much more so in the transit routes connecting western Ethiopia with the Nile and the Sudan railways. As the traffic through British Somaliland is never likely to reach a heavy volume, enough has been said about the eastern side. Let us, therefore, now examine in detail the four main transit routes between Ethiopia and the Sudan with a view to their possibilities of improvement. These routes from south to north are : (1) Gambela-Malakal (on the White Nile) ; (2) (a) Kurmuk-El Galhak-Er Renk (on the White Nile), and (b) Kurmuk-Roseires (on the Blue Nile) ; (3) Gallabat-Gedaref (on the Sudan railways) ; and (4) Biscia (terminus of the Massawa-Asmara railway) to Kassala (on the Sudan railways).

Gambela has long been the most important outlet for Ethiopian coffee on the western side of the country. In 1936 the total export of coffee to the Sudan by frontier stations amounted to £E.189,715, and of this £E.139,887 passed through Gambela. A good deal of this coffee has hitherto been collected at Buri and brought to Gambela by a superior track made by the British firm of Gellatly, Hankey & Co., of Khartoum ; and supplies have also come from the Saio district by means of a rough track. But so far there are no proper road communications with this or any of the other points of transit. Although motor vehicles have on occasions succeeded in getting through from Addis Abeba to Gambela, the journey is still a rough passage. When the new roads from Addis Abeba to Lekemti and Gimma are extended to the Sudan frontier, the activities of this whole area will assume an entirely different aspect. Among other exports by this route have been wax, hides, and skins, while imports have chiefly consisted of salt, Japanese cotton goods from the market of Omdurman, and various odds and ends for native consumption.

It is, however, only from June to October that the Baro is navigable. During these months Nile steamers maintain a service each way between Gambela and Khartoum (a distance by river of 849 miles with a

journey of about thirteen days). On the White Nile section of the journey there is a more frequent service between Khartoum and Malakal, taking from five to six days to cover the distance of 509 miles. Navigation is possible on the White Nile itself at almost all seasons and without transshipment from Alexandria to Wadi Halfa and from Khartoum to Juba (near the frontiers of Uganda and the Belgian Congo). The seasonal restriction of navigation is confined to the Baro, the worst section being that on the Italian side of the frontier (east of Nasir). With a view to the possible improvement of conditions in order to extend the period of navigation, Italian naval experts have carried out investigations, but the results are not promising. It seems that the most that can be done is to extend the navigation period by two months by blowing up rocks and building up banks to prevent overflowing.

The distance from Gambela to Nasir, the first centre of any importance after crossing the Sudan frontier, is 143 miles. As there is no road, the only means of communication in the dry season (about eight months in the year) is by canoe. Nasir is the headquarters of the Eastern Nuer district, and has a wireless station as well as a landing-ground for aircraft. From this point to Malakal the distance by river is 197 miles, and there is a track for light motor traffic in dry weather. Hence during the greater part of the year communications between Malakal and Gambela depend on this track and the vagaries of native canoes. Malakal is a place of growing importance. Besides being the chief town of the Upper Nile province of the Sudan and a centre of the Egyptian Irrigation Department, there is a wireless station and a flying-boat alighting area. This is a place of call for the Imperial Airways South African service of flying-boats, and is now within a little over two days from Southampton. From here to Kosti, on the Sudan railways, the distance of 311 miles is covered in about three and a half days by Nile steamer. From Kosti it is a matter of 237 miles by rail to Khartoum and 691 miles to Port Sudan.

A great disadvantage of the Gambela route is the long period of storage made necessary by seasonal transit, so that merchants have to be out of pocket for many months besides incurring the consequent risks of fluctuation in prices. Also, the period when the Gambela route is open happens to be the season of the year when capital is most needed for cotton cultivation in the Nile Valley. There is little doubt that, with the increase of coffee and other exports, and the building of tarmac roads to the frontier, Gambela's position will diminish owing to the long distance from Khartoum and Port Sudan and its dependence on a seasonal river traffic. Yet, if a road is built from Gambela to Nasir for the dry season, and the Baro channel is improved for the wet season, it is likely that this river port will continue to handle a certain proportion of export trade. Gambela's most formidable competitors will be the alternative routes to the Sudan by way of Kurmuk.

Kurmuk, situated on the frontier between the Ethiopian region of Beni Shangul and the Blue Nilc province of the Sudan, has several important advantages. This point of transit occupies a central position on the frontier; is nearer to Addis Abeba on the one hand, and to Khartoum and Port Sudan on the other; has two alternative transit routes—to the White and Blue Niles respectively—and is to a considerable extent independent of seasonal transit. Although on both sides communications are still confined to rough tracks passable for motor vehicles in dry weather, the new Italian road system is steadily pushing forward in this direction. The road from Addis Abeba to Lekemti and Ghimbi is already finished for some distance at the Addis Abeba end, and will be extended to Kurmuk; while Saio and Gore will also be connected with Kurmuk by a road as soon as the work can be carried out. This point of transit will then serve a most extended area producing quantities of timber, as well as coffee and other agricultural products. Hitherto a certain proportion of Ethiopian coffee and other produce has reached the Sudan by this route, and motor vehicles are making the

journey with difficulty from Khartoum to Addis Abeba. In 1936 the Sudan imports from Ethiopia through Kurmuk amounted to £E.47,311, compared with £E.140,362 through Gambela. That Kurmuk is already superseding Gambela is shown by the figures for 1937, when the Sudan imports via Kurmuk increased to £E.92,561, and those via Gambela decreased to £E.51,024. As time passes, this process is likely to continue until Kurmuk becomes the most important point of transit between Western Ethiopia and the Sudan.

One route from Kurmuk, where there is a district headquarters and a landing-ground for aircraft, follows a Sudan track through Ulu to El Galhak on the White Nile (a distance of 128 miles). It then follows the river north to Er Renk (a further 53 miles), which is a regular port of call for the Sudan Government steamers. There is also an alternative track direct from Kurmuk to Er Renk via Wisko and Gulu, but any saving in distance is probably more than counterbalanced by difficulties of transit. The former route also has the advantage of reaching the Nile quicker. From Er Renk to the railway at Kosti is a matter of 108 miles, or about twenty-seven hours by Nile steamer.

The other route, which connects Kurmuk with the Blue Nile at Roseires (the limit of navigation) is the most promising of all. Its chief advantages lie in the fact that the road from Kurmuk to Roseires continues from there to Suki on the Sudan Railways, thereby providing a means of transit during the season when the river is not navigable. When the river is navigable, the rains render the road impassable. There is also a road to the river port and important trading centre at Singa, situated on the opposite bank of the Nile from Suki and about 14 miles farther upstream. The distance by road from Kurmuk to Roseires via Wisko is 120 miles, and from Roseires to Suki 128 miles, making the total distance to the railway connection with Khartoum and Port Sudan a matter of 248 miles. By river from Roseires

to Suki is 135 miles, the journey taking from two to four days, according to whether the direction is up or down stream. The Blue Nile is navigable as far as Roseires from June to December, and the Sudan Government maintain each way a fortnightly service of steamers. As there is no lock in the Makwar Dam, river traffic to Khartoum is not possible; but there is a good road (Sudan standard) from Suki to Khartoum, a distance of about 200 miles. This route offers a road and river outlet for the valuable timber of the Ethiopian forests; and it remains to be seen whether the wood can be got out this way at reasonable cost. In the case of the forests of the southern Sudan, the cost of transporting the timber to the river is so great that much of it is cut up and used as fuel for the river steamers. At present the only obvious disadvantage of this route is that there is no special freight tariff, as in the case of Gambela.¹

The route from Gallabat (on the frontier north-west of Lake Tana) to Gedaref (on the Sudan railways about half-way between Suki and Kassala) is of minor importance now that Gondar has its outlet via Massawa and the Red Sea. With a seven months' wet season this route will probably be confined to the local needs of the region south of Lake Tana, unless the rapid development of western Ethiopia, and an ever-increasing transit traffic over the Sudan frontier, make it necessary to use every available route. Hitherto a certain trade has been carried on through Gallabat, the distance to Gedaref being about 96 miles. The rough road is passable for motor transport from January to May and during November and December. Coffee, live stock, butter, and honey are exported from Ethiopia, while exports from the Sudan consist chiefly of cotton goods (mainly Japanese), artificial silk, linen, and oddments.

The transit route via Kassala has the advantage of having the shortest distance of all (18 miles) between the frontier and the Sudan railways at a point 343 miles from Port Sudan. There is an Italian railway (950 mm.

¹ *Vide* Chapter VII.

gauge) connecting Massawa with Biscia, 75 miles east of Kassala as the crow flies. From there two roads lead to Kassala, one via Sabderat where there is an international wireless station, and the other via Tessenei where the Italians have important cotton plantations. The new tarmac road from Asmara through Keren and Agordat is making good progress in this direction. As, however, Eritrea is so far a poor country, most of which depends on Massawa, there is little traffic via Kassala. In 1937 the imports to the Sudan by this route amounted to £E.6,133, compared with £E.92,561 via Kurmuk and £E.51,024 via Gambela. Here we have the most favourable transit conditions of which little use can at present be made.

The best transit prospects from almost every point of view lie in the route from Kurmuk to Roseires and on to Suki on the Sudan railways. Not only is this the route along which there is likely to be the greatest increase in trade, but transit through Port Sudan may be expected to begin in this direction. It is also the most direct route between the most important parts of Ethiopia and the great market at Omdurman, and its importance is intensified by its proximity to the Blue Nile and the prospects of development of many kinds along this water-way. This is the route to which the Italians attach most importance, partly for strategical reasons and partly for the economic reasons already stated. It must be realized that in Italian plans for road construction and in a considerable proportion of development projects, strategical considerations still take precedence of economic factors. It is hoped that with the increase of mutual confidence this process will gradually be reversed, but in the meantime it is necessary to bear in mind the strategical position with regard to this important transit route.

A glance at the map will show that Sennar is a most important strategical point in this part of the Sudan. It is the junction of the railway lines leading to Kosti (on the White Nile) and to El Obeid, to Wad Medani and Khartoum, and to Kassala and Port Sudan. It is also the side of the Makwar Dam through which flows the

most valuable part of the Nile system ; and Sennar is connected by railway with Khartoum, a little south of which is the Jebel Aulia Dam on the White Nile. It must therefore be taken for granted that any attack on the Sudan from the east would be directed at the important strategical point of Sennar. Although I do not believe for one moment that the Italians have any designs in this direction, no sensible nation neglects to take into consideration every possibility. For this reason and owing to the obvious prospect of increasing transit by this route as a result of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, the Sudan Government would be wise to construct a first-class motor road from Suki through Roseires and Wisko to Kurmuk in anticipation of increasing traffic. If this were an all-weather road fit for the passage of heavy diesel-engine lorries, it would serve both strategical and transit purposes at the same time. The roads for which there is no immediate urgency, but which will have to be improved to meet changing conditions, are : (1) the road from Kassala to Khartoum ; (2) the track from Gallabat to Gedaref ; (3) the track from Kurmuk to El-Galhak and on to Er Renk ; (4) the track from Er Renk to Wisko (on the road from Kurmuk to Roseires) ; (5) and the construction of a road from Gambela to Nasir, and the improvement of the existing track from Nasir to Malakal.

Let us now turn to the larger aspect of transit in North-East Africa, involving Egypt, Libya, the Sudan, and Italian East Africa. It has already been shown that the Nile route as at present operated would not be economical for transit between the Mediterranean and Italian East Africa. This is partly due to high rates on the railways and steamers, and partly because of the necessary transshipment *en route*. It is even doubtful whether the extension of the Egyptian State Railways to join the Sudan Railways at Wadi Halfa would improve the economic position sufficiently to make it a practicable transit route. A solution may eventually be found in building a road from Khartoum to Cairo. There seems no apparent

reason why an all-weather road for heavy motor traffic should not be constructed through the Nubian Desert to Wadi Halfa and on through Upper Egypt to the Delta. Whether this will become an economic possibility depends on the volume of traffic, reduced cost of motor fuel, cost of upkeep, and many technical factors. There is also the probability that to some extent a road of this kind would create its own traffic, especially in Upper Egypt where industries would receive considerable encouragement. But this is not a question for the immediate future, and here again the strategical factor comes into play. If such a road were built, it is more than likely that the Italians would want a large share in the construction of it, and in the traffic backwards and forwards through Egypt and the Sudan. As this would increase Italian influence in these countries, which might easily lead to a very substantial interest, it is questionable whether Great Britain and Egypt would favour such a plan. They would not lose sight of Italy's alternative route via the Red Sea and the fact that she is well established in Libya. Yet many changes may occur before the question arises whether the opening up of this route for road transport is practical politics; and much depends on the success of Anglo-Italian co-operation on a solid foundation of mutual confidence.

As Italian transit from Libya through the Sudan to Italian East Africa is a possible means of evading the Suez Canal dues, it must be taken into consideration. It is presumed that this route from Italy would be by sea to Benghazi, and from there by desert road through Aujila and the Kufra Oasis. From Kufra the present caravan route crosses the Sudan frontier near Jebel el-Wenat and continues to Bir-en-Natrun, from which point there are several caravan routes to the centres of the northern Sudan such as Wadi Halfa and Dongola. The distance from Benghazi to Dongola by this route is roughly estimated at about 918 miles, and it is desert all the way. The only place where it is possible to replenish water supplies between Kufra and Bir-en-Natrun is at the wells

of El-Wenat and the neighbouring spring of Ain-Zuiea. The whole desert region between the coastal oases of Libya and the Nile in the Sudan is practically a 'no-man's-land' for nearly one thousand miles. It is therefore anything but an attractive transit route, and one which would call for elaborate organization of supplies of all kinds at many posts established along its length.

It was a simple matter for Marshal Balbo to fly from Tripoli to Kufra and then over the Sudan to Asmara and Harar, but land transport by this route is difficult to contemplate. Yet, with Italian capacity to build roads quickly in the face of great natural difficulties, the possibility of this route being opened up has to be taken into account. The new coastal road from Tunis to Egypt, a distance of about 1,140 miles, shows what can be done with the use of modern methods. But should the Italians ever contemplate a move in this direction, it will immediately raise a strategical question very much similar to that arising out of a road along the Nile Valley. These two possible transit routes connecting with the Mediterranean raise important questions of policy, which do not arise in the case of transit through Port Sudan. In both the larger projects it would be a question of creating a main line of Italian communications through Anglo-Egyptian territory, especially in the Libyan case. It is also difficult to see how the Libyan road could create any traffic in hundreds of miles of vast wilderness.

Meanwhile, the opening up of the transit routes between western Ethiopia and the Sudan will speed up colonization and development in Italy's new Empire; and, as soon as arrangements are complete, some of the traffic now going through Massawa will be diverted to Port Sudan, and new traffic for hitherto undeveloped regions will increase in volume by this route. While these routes are obvious outlets for trade and transit, the future will no doubt see the opening up of other routes in different directions. The advance guard of trade and transit movements is civil aviation, and the starting of air services may provide some indication as to

the future directions of trade. Small local air services, feeding the main trans-continental routes, are likely to be among the results of Anglo-Italian co-operation. As development increases, the traffic may become too heavy for aircraft and demand ground haulage. This entails the road construction of some kind, which in itself would stimulate local trade until gradually the volume increased sufficiently to justify better communications and better methods of motor transport. It is by a process such as this that new trade routes will develop, and there is much to be said for the Italian belief that in these parts of Africa the building of trade routes produces trade itself.

CHAPTER XIII

BRITISH INTERESTS AND THE FUTURE

BEFORE considering the importance of British interests in North-East Africa, and the ways in which these can best be upheld, it is necessary to take into account the interests and aims of the other European Powers in this area. Now that Italy is established in Ethiopia, her chief object is to maintain her position there in a state of self-sufficiency as far as possible ; and to safeguard her communications with the mother-country. It is of importance to her that these communications should be free of foreign interference, and relieved as far as possible from foreign economic barriers. In order to attain these objects, Italy has to strengthen her position in the Red Sea by increasing her naval units in these waters, and by adding to her fortified strategical points. She also has to come to some agreement with France over the Jibuti difficulty, and hopes to find some way of obtaining a more economic arrangement at Suez. Jibuti is the only French strategical point that interferes in any way with Italy's communications ; for the difficulty in connection with the Suez Canal is really international.

From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean the communications of Italy and Great Britain run parallel, but Italy suffers from the disadvantage of being the latest arrival and of finding the main strategical points already occupied. It is therefore obvious that she will do everything she can to make the best of such strategical points as are still available. It is unfortunate that civilized nations should still find it necessary, in situations such as this, to hold places here and there and point guns at one another.

But this is likely to continue until they gradually come to the conclusion that it is more conducive to friendly relations and peaceful progress, as well as much more economical, to do away with all these scattered store-houses of dynamite. As Italian East Africa is situated at the southern end of the Red Sea and separated from the Mediterranean by the Suez Canal, the strongest safeguard for Italy's communications is friendship with Britain and France whose strength on this route is already consolidated. But in these days of modern inventions friendship in Africa must also mean friendship in Europe and in the Mediterranean. Any other policy would be disastrous.

Italy also has to take into consideration her British and Egyptian neighbours in East Africa. By these she is now practically surrounded, and her inland communications depend for their security on British friendship. For the same reason good relations with Britain are of importance for the successful maintenance of Italy's position, as also for the satisfactory development of her newly-acquired territories, and their economic progress. Although it is still too early to say whether the Italians will find it possible to obtain complete self-sufficiency in North-East Africa, they will undoubtedly continue to work with this object in view ; and it may only interfere to a limited extent with commercial relations over the frontiers. On the other hand, there are ways in which a government-controlled economic system, based on national policy, can promote trade and transit relations more effectively than if these activities were in the hands of individuals.

There is no possible doubt that Italian interests in North-East Africa, whether they be political, strategical, or economic, can best be served by a working friendship with Britain. Although the details of co-operation between the two countries are certain to raise difficulties of various kinds, these can be overcome on a basis of mutual benefit, owing to the position in which the two nations are placed in relationship to one another. A question that has created a serious obstacle has been that of uncertainty on the British side as to Italy's ultimate

aims. In times when 'New Moves' were the fashion in international politics, there was a certain hesitation for anyone to commit themselves to anything. The British public, slow to move at all times, were slowly but solidly increasing their interest in friendship with Italy after the signing of the Anglo-Italian Agreement. They understood that with the conquest of Ethiopia Italy was a satisfied Power in the colonial sphere. But just as this attitude was firmly taking shape in Britain, it was seriously upset by the raising of further claims in Italy. Although these claims were at the time unofficial, they were regarded as having received the '*imprimatur*' of the Italian Government; and this destroyed a large proportion of the confidence which had been built up since the raising of sanctions. The British public did not stop to consider the justice or injustice of some of these claims against France. They strongly disliked in themselves the methods used and felt that such a process might well be extended still further if these new claims were successful.

Ever since the Italo-Ethiopian War there has been a suspicion in this country that Italy had designs on the Sudan and Egypt, but this is apt to be intensified by a casual glance at a small-scale map. In an atlas map the position of Egypt and the Sudan in relation to Libya and Italian East Africa looks somewhat precarious. When, however, the geographical features of this are studied on large-scale maps, and other important factors are taken into account, it will be seen that a 'move' in this direction would be scarcely tempting. As the whole of Libya with the exception of the coastal oases is almost waterless desert the whole way to the Sudan, lines of communication through this wilderness would be almost impossible to maintain in time of war owing to attack by aircraft.¹ Also, Italy's sea communications with her base in Libya would depend on her complete control of the central Mediterranean, while Libya herself would be open to attack from Tunis.

On the Ethiopian side the Italians are at present

¹ *Vide* Chapter XII.

dependent on passage through the Suez Canal for a large proportion of their supplies, which could be cut off by naval action outside the three-mile limit at either end of the Canal. Hence military operations from this end would necessitate Italian command of the sea in the eastern Mediterranean. Although there might be little to prevent the aerial bombing of the Nile dams and barrages, the natives of the Ethiopian highlands would be unsuitable in more than one way for operations in the Nile Valley. In any case, an Italian 'move' against Egypt or the Sudan would immediately provoke war, the issue of which would not be decided in the valley of the Nile. As far as Egypt is concerned, the population is already dense in the areas that can be populated, and there is no room for the overflow of population from European countries. These are some of the reasons why it is impossible to take seriously the possibility of Italian designs on the Nile Valley.

If, on the other hand, we concentrate our attention on what Italy has to gain by co-operation with Egypt and the Sudan, it becomes more and more obvious that her true interests lie in this direction. She can get the outlet she needs for western Ethiopia and valuable help in her development projects without incurring any responsibility beyond the payment for what she receives. The fact that Italy is a 'late comer' in the colonial sense is no reason why she should be regarded as an intruder. She has brought with her much that is good and helpful to others; and, if we do not like some of her methods of asserting what she wants, we must realize that her way has been blocked ever since the Peace Treaties, and that we have failed to respond to colonial claims put forward in polite and courteous terms. As a new-comer, she finds herself with certain disadvantages, and looks for co-operation with those already established. But naturally she wants something in return in more senses than one. She not only wants practical co-operation with concrete results, but also acceptance as an equal among other colonial Powers. She knows she has something valuable to give

in her African friendship, and wants to feel that others are anxious to have that friendship and are prepared to support their friendly words by equally friendly actions.

Although the Anglo-Italian Agreement marked the end of a most unfortunate period of bad relations, it did not mean a return to what is commonly known as the 'old traditional friendship.' Anglo-Italian relations before the Ethiopian War were based on a lack of conflicting interests, and a good deal of sentimentalism associated on one side with an admiration of the power and efficiency of the British Navy, and on the other side with a romantic attachment to the sunny scenery of Italy and to her historical monuments, literature, and art treasures. Also, although Italians and Englishmen are differently constituted in almost every way, as a result of race, religion, environment, and occupation, they have never failed to appreciate and admire each other's opposite nature. While this personal factor still holds good to-day, Anglo-Italian relations are now on an entirely different basis. The modern Italian with his inventive and progressive genius stimulated by the teaching of Mussolini, thinks more of what he himself has created than of what lies in the Roman Forum, or hangs in the picture galleries of Florence and Venice. He attaches more importance to the new port of Genoa, to the efficiency of the Ansaldo and Fiat works, and to the new ships of the Italian Navy and Mercantile Marine, than he does to all the scenes of natural beauty that Italy can provide. He knows what has been done to reclaim the land of the Pontine Marshes, and he has an implicit faith in the capacity of his race to turn Ethiopia to the best use. Hence the friendship of Italy can no longer be maintained on our side by sitting in a deck-chair and admiring the Bay of Naples from Sorrento, or by a deep appreciation of Italian museum pieces. The British Navy factor no longer holds good, because the Italians now have a strong navy of their own which attracts much more attention.

If we are going to cultivate a real and lasting friendship

with Italy on a basis of changed conditions, the first thing we have to do is to come to appreciate Italian achievements in recent years, and to conduct our policy with a sympathetic understanding of Italy's great effort to become an important colonial Power as well as a great Power of Europe. If we as a people can show a genuine desire for knowledge of Italian activities and achievements in all branches of inventive, scientific, and material progress, we shall have gone a long way towards gaining the real friendship of this Latin people. The same applies to the development of Italian East Africa, where remarkable progress made in a short space of time has so far not received from the British public the attention that it deserves. The Press can do work of immense value in the building up of good relations between Great Britain and Italy. Relations are no longer based on the absence of conflicting issues. With the rise of Italy to power, differences have naturally arisen between her and Britain owing to the proximity of their activities and spheres of influence. These difficulties have to be overcome by a system of give and take in the interests of a common working agreement. It is also as well to bear in mind that Italy suffered so severely at the Peace Conference, that she is somewhat sceptical in making bargains with the Allied Powers. We cannot deceive ourselves that we do not owe something to Italy, and if we bear this in mind in all our dealings we shall have our reward. If the Italians are suspicious of any attempt to benefit at their expense, they are equally appreciative to consideration provided it is given as from one equal to another.

Although towards the end of last century French interests in North-East Africa were considerable, and largely directed against Great Britain, a complete change in Anglo-French relations was brought about by the Anglo-French Declaration of 1904 and by the Entente Cordiale. At the time the French obtained the Concession for the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway, they were making use of Ethiopia in an effort to extend their influence from that

country, through the Southern Sudan, to French Equatorial Africa. Their object was to render impossible the British plan for the Cape to Cairo railway. When, however, France obtained a free hand in Morocco in exchange for concessions made to Britain in Egypt, French interests became concentrated in North Africa and the above project was abandoned. The only relic of this policy of penetration, culminating in the 'Fashoda' incident of 1898, is the Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway. French interests are, therefore, now confined to her Red Sea communications and the maintenance of her coaling-station at Jibuti. Should she be prepared to move her position a little up the coast to make room for a natural Italian outlet for central Ethiopia, she would be serving the interests of North-East African co-operation without reducing the importance of her position in the Red Sea. But this is a matter for France to decide.

Since the opening of the Suez Canal, British interests in North-East Africa have been concerned, directly or indirectly, with safeguarding communications by this route. In the direct sense, British policy aims at insuring the independence of Egypt, now in the closest alliance with Britain, and at protecting the Suez Canal. At the southern end of the Red Sea British communications are protected at Aden, the island of Perim and British Somaliland. Between these two extreme points it is a fundamental feature of British policy that no foreign Power should establish itself on the eastern side of the Red Sea or exert undue influence in Saudi Arabia or the Yemen. Full agreement on this point was reached with Italy in the Anglo-Italian Agreement. In the indirect sense, it is of vital importance to Egypt that her southern frontier should be protected by the maintenance of stable conditions in the Sudan, and that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the water supply of the Nile. For these reasons a large amount of British capital has been sunk in Sudan development projects, and great efforts have been made to increase the supply of water which is so vital to Egypt. While these considerations are indirectly

connected with sea communications, a new interest has lately been introduced by the opening up of the South African air route, which is likely to increase in importance as time passes.

Before the Italo-Ethiopian War, British policy in Addis Abeba was chiefly concerned with upholding British interests with regard to the waters of Lake Tana and the Blue Nile, which was a continuation of the policy of preserving the security of Egypt and the Suez Canal. At that time, the semi-barbarous conditions prevailing in Ethiopia insured a passive attitude towards British communications at the southern end of the Red Sea. Practically the only connection between Ethiopia and the outside world was by means of the small trade which passed over the Jibuti railway and the caravan routes leading to the other frontiers. The Government of the Negus had no aims or objects outside the country, and they concentrated their attention on pitting the various European Powers against one another, and trying to prevent any of them from increasing their influence at the expense of Ethiopia. It was a purely defensive policy, which was carried to such lengths that any attempts at progress by Europeans were stubbornly opposed all along the line. If European ideas were to be introduced, they were to be carried out by Ethiopians. While the Emperor Haile Selassié made the introduction of European ideas a strong feature of his policy, the obstacles put in the way of Europeans themselves precluded tangible results in any ordinary period of time. Under these conditions Ethiopia was of little or no importance as far as British sea communications were concerned.

With the arrival of the Italians an entirely different situation has been created. A European Government has been set up with a large European army of occupation. First-class modern communications are rapidly replacing the most primitive tracks ; the latest forms of transport have been introduced ; and an increasing number of Europeans are transforming the country from a semi-barbarous condition to the colonial possession of a great

Power. This means that a European factor of the greatest importance has to be taken into account at a vital point of British sea communications, as well as at the source of the Blue Nile. These communications are, therefore, affected both in their direct and indirect sense. They are directly affected at the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, and indirectly at the Suez Canal, through Italy controlling the head waters of the Blue Nile which are essential to the life of Egypt. Instead of a passive Ethiopia, we now have to take into account a European Government with all the vigour of youth, feeling its way in an immense region of great possibilities ; and in the early days of occupation and development uncertainty is accentuated by the impossibility of knowing exactly how or in what direction the forward movement will go. Whereas formerly Italy's interests in the Red Sea were more or less insignificant, these have now greatly increased as well as her strength as a maritime and air Power. We are, therefore, faced with the problem of how best to deal with this new situation in the interests of British communications directly, and with the subsidiary questions which indirectly affect them.

Now that Italy is firmly established in North-East Africa, it is obvious that any attempt to eject her is quite out of the question. Moreover, if her presence is dealt with in the right way, it will prove to be a vast improvement upon previous conditions. It therefore follows that the only policy by which Great Britain can strengthen her position in this corner of Africa is one of accepting the new situation, and of deriving benefit from friendly relations of a practical kind. Both in the Red Sea and on the Nile the best method of safeguarding our vital interests is one of co-operation, development, and strength. But it is essential that in this area both Powers should co-operate on a basis of absolute equality, and that there should be no attempt on the part of one to strengthen its position at the expense of the other. This is one of the cases where economic factors can greatly influence political relations, and it is not too much to say that our

strategical position in this section of our imperial communications must now be based partly on economic considerations. If we can succeed in making it in Italy's vital interests to work in friendly co-operation with us, we shall have not only consolidated our position with relation to the Italians, but our position in this part of Africa will be more secure than ever before. If we find the Italians full of wants and inclined to be pushing in their requests for them, let us remember that they are doing now what we did last century. If we think that Italy is exacting, let us not forget the gulf that lies between what she was promised by the Allies at the time of the Great War, and what she actually received when accounts came to be settled.

Germany has chosen war as a means of trying to get what she wants. Italy has chosen peace. With her we have to go through a process of peaceful treaty revision, the success of which depends on the realization that to-day civilized nations should share the wealth and benefits of the world in which they live. If the rectification of injustices is ever to form the basis of peace, 'Justice' must not be restricted to what one set of Powers would 'like to give'; nor must it be extended to include all that another set of Powers would 'like to have.' Justice is not based on likes or dislikes. We on the one side must be prepared to make reasonable sacrifices to accommodate the Italians; while the Italians on the other side must refrain from insisting on the instant satisfaction of extravagant demands. We no longer live in the nineteenth century, when Britain dominated most of the globe and held an extensive monopoly of industry and trade. With twentieth-century progress and the increased capacity of others to make use of what the world can produce, it is only reasonable that we should 'go shares' with those who have acquired a position of equality with us, partly through their own efforts, and partly owing to the change of conditions brought about by modern inventions and the general advance of industry. We must accept a result of world evolution which we could not prevent.

Yet Britain will yield nothing in the face of threats, whatever be the source or sources from which they come.

Let us now consider in more detail how British interests in North-East Africa can best be served. As a strong and prosperous Egypt is fundamental for our sea and air communications, it is necessary that British policy should whole-heartedly support the efforts of the new King of Egypt, and encourage independent progress especially in communications by land and air. It goes without saying that the military strength and efficiency of Egypt is of the utmost importance until such time as the nations settle down to more peaceful pursuits. But there are other ways in which Egypt's position can be strengthened. The recent efforts of the Egyptian Government to introduce new crops to make the country less dependent on the cotton crop are all to the good ; and further efforts of this kind are to be encouraged, if they are likely to make the country more self-contained in the primary necessities of life. The same may be said of local industries, the growth of which Great Britain can encourage by not putting economic obstacles in their way. What Great Britain would lose by local competition she would gain by a stronger and a more self-contained Egypt.

In trade and transit between Egypt and the Sudan, every increase of the former or improvement of the latter is a contribution to Anglo-Egyptian strength in the Nile Valley. Also, a slow but steady increase in Egypt's share in the affairs of the Sudan will help to consolidate this section of North-East Africa. The time has come when differences between Great Britain and Egypt in the Sudan will be most detrimental, not only to the interests of these two allied Powers, but also to their capacity to co-operate with Italy. Last, but not least, it will be most unfortunate if the British Government allows the situation in Palestine to weaken the Egyptian strong-point. With so many Moslem Powers deeply interested in the welfare of the Arabic-speaking people of the Holy Land, Britain stands

to gain or lose much in the Nile and Red Sea area by the way she settles this difficult question.

With the arrival of another European Power east of Suez, the time has surely come when the Suez Canal should cease to be an economic obstacle, and become a more general convenience. Not only should Italy have a seat on the Board as second largest user of the Canal, but British influence might well be exerted to bring about more economical working and a reduction of profits, thereby enabling the dues to be further reduced. It has been argued that heavy expenses such as Suez Canal dues are one of the disadvantages of having a colonial Empire, and that Italy has therefore no complaint. But let it be remembered that the British Government receives a large sum annually in dividends, and that a great deal of the profits go into the pockets of French shareholders. Italy pays out large sums in transit dues but receives nothing. The position would be much eased if she were enabled to acquire a certain number of shares in the Company.

When development is taking place throughout Italian East Africa, the time will come to consider once more plans for improving the Nile water-supply, and of carrying out works in British territory simultaneously with those across the Italian frontier. If the Lake Tana Dam is to be built, it might seem advisable also to construct a dam at Lake Albert and to make a canal through the Sudd region to reduce evaporation. These works would entail the expenditure of large sums of money, but the advantage to be gained might well justify the cost spread over a long period. Projects of this kind would not only bring material benefit to Egypt and the Sudan, and insure a substantial reserve of water in case of need, but would bring activity to the whole region of the Upper Nile. The psychological effect of this might well be far reaching in its influence on other developments and progress.

Other ways in which Anglo-Italian co-operation would have a stabilizing effect, are arrangements to control the Blue Nile flood on the Ethiopian side, and to extend the system of Nile gauges beyond Roseires. As the use of

Blue Nile water for electrical purposes would not interfere with its use for irrigation, it looks as if some arrangement could be reached by which the Blue Nile flood could be reduced in volume, and spread over a longer period to the advantage of Egypt and the Sudan. It might also be possible for the Italians to make use of this regulation of the river flow for the generation of electrical power. This would affect the Blue Nile water supplied by tributaries in Ethiopia, and its regulation would, of course, have to fit in with the release of water from the reservoir at Lake Tana. While this is merely a suggestion of what might be done, the one Nile problem which binds British, Egyptian, and Italian interests together more than any other is that of land erosion. Reference has already been made to the fundamental importance of a full study of this question with a view to something being done without delay;¹ so it is only repeated here as being an important Anglo-Egyptian interest which is served by co-operation with Italy, besides being an urgent matter from the Italian point of view. Another way in which we can strengthen our position in North-East Africa is by improving and accelerating river transport, on the principle that a better service of steamers would stimulate development which in turn would produce increased traffic.

The most effective way to consolidate the British position in the Red Sea under changed conditions would seem to be by means of an Anglo-French-Italian Agreement. Although such an agreement is impossible until the situation in Europe settles down, efforts might well be made to work for a rearrangement of the position at the south end of the Red Sea, so as to reconcile Italy's interests there with those already established by Great Britain and France. It is quite obvious that the arrival of Italy in full force completely alters the situation, and that changes must take place if friction is to be avoided at rather a sensitive point in the vital communications of three great Powers.

- ¹ *Vide* Chapter V.

Along the frontiers of the Sudan, Kenya, and British Somaliland, there is a great opportunity for strengthening our own position by carrying out work complementary to Italian development. The establishment and maintenance of public security among the frontier tribes depends largely on a good working arrangement between European officials on both sides. Once this is established, the opening up of transit routes offers a valuable opportunity of making the British and Anglo-Egyptian territories more and more helpful to Italy. If these territories become obstructions to Italian development, the British position will be weakened. If, on the other hand, they are helpful, and obviously willing to meet the needs of Italy in her difficult task, the British position will be strengthened. Reference has already been made to the difference between the British and Italian policies in the matter of road building. In this connexion it is important to decide what essential roads are to be built in the immediate future, and what roads are to be planned for construction as soon as circumstances justify the expenditure.

With a British air service operating in the Nile Valley, and an Italian service connecting Addis Abeba and Asmara with Khartoum, there is reason to anticipate that the two will work in with one another in localities where there is no competition. Small feeder services, serving frontier districts, might in course of time be most helpful to both Governments as well as to business firms occupied in development work. With regard to actual trade apart from transit, everything within reason should be done to encourage an easy exchange of goods. But perhaps more important still in the early stages is an effort to make use of exchanges of services. If we are experts in some classes of work, the Italians are experts in others ; and it is surely for the benefit of both that the one should make use of the expert capabilities of the other. Another form of exchange valuable to both sides would be that of information on development projects and economic plans generally. If each knew in advance

what was likely to take place on the other side, there would be time to work out plans for co-operation to mutual advantage. Smooth running co-operation depends to a considerable extent on the pace being even on both sides. If one moves faster than the other, there are irritating delays, which are one of the more common causes of bad feeling. Exchange of information should act as a safeguard against this.

These are only some of the ways in which Anglo-Italian co-operation can strengthen the British position in North-East Africa, the principle being one of creating favourable surroundings for the newcomer. Italy's African susceptibilities have to be carefully studied. She has just acquired new territory of vast dimensions, and she is fully aware that she does not possess the colonial experience of her principal neighbours. If she receives consideration on a basis of equality, and is made to understand that she will receive every friendly assistance to settle down, the situation thus created will quickly develop into an indispensable bond binding her to a friendly line of policy. From situations of this kind vital interests are created ; and in North-East Africa peace, prosperity, and progress depend on vital interests such as these. But Anglo-Italian co-operation in itself is not enough. If North-East Africa is to make the most of its possibilities, and benefit to the fullest extent from modern inventions, general co-operation between all the European Powers in that area is imperative. Discord between European Powers has the most disastrous reaction on the native inhabitants, who do everything they can to encourage the discord and turn it to their own advantage. This has happened in different parts of the world times without number, and is one of the strong arguments in favour of European solidarity in regions inhabited by native races.

Before the introduction of modern means of transport, North-East Africa was a collection of more or less watertight compartments. The questions affecting one territory were regarded as local and having little or no connexion with what happened elsewhere. It is only recently that it

has been possible, and even desirable, to consider North-East Africa as a definite geographical, political, and economic unit. Modern transport has brought its component parts much closer together, and travel between the different territories is now a simple matter. But if transport has brought the countries closer together, it has also made them much more dependent on one another. Gone are the days when all south of Khartoum was regarded as 'the blue.' To-day there is pressure of development from both north and south, which with the help of modern inventions will transform into active life these distant regions of the Upper Nile.

With the co-operation of Great Britain, Italy, France, and Egypt, it may be assured that the best value will be obtained out of North-East Africa as a whole, for the benefit of each of these Powers as well as of the native populations. Without co-operation it is impossible adequately to study the many and varied problems of these countries as a basis for improvement and development. In his monumental work on African questions, Lord Hailey says that 'no one question can be studied in isolation; there is a close interdependence among all the essential problems of Africa.' What concerns one European Power concerns them all, directly or indirectly, in varying degree. Each Power has a contribution to make towards the general knowledge of many complicated questions, and each can derive great benefit from the knowledge and experience of the others.

It is significant that at the moment when policies of co-operation followed almost immediately in the footsteps of transport development, there should have been two important and valuable indications of the need for a more determined and comprehensive study of African questions. One was the publication in London of *An African Survey*, by Lord Hailey; the other was the result of the Volta Conference on Africa, organized in Rome in October 1938, by the Royal Academy of Italy.

A mere casual glance at the pages of Lord Hailey's book is sufficient to show the kind of subjects urgently

calling for more thorough study. A somewhat closer examination soon creates conviction that only a combined effort by all the colonial Powers can produce the best results. So important does Lord Hailey consider this whole question of African research, that he has recommended the voting of funds for this purpose by the British Treasury as a capital investment from which most valuable benefits can be expected in the future. To this he has added a further suggestion 'that the difficulty which is now felt in readily obtaining information should be met by the establishment of an African Bureau covering social, economic, scientific, and administrative problems, which will constitute both a clearing-house and a source of assistance to all those who are pursuing research or inquiring into African questions.'

This last conclusion was also reached at the African Conference in Rome. During a week's work, a vast quantity of most valuable and up-to-date information was put into a common pool by experts from all the European nations having territories or interests in Africa. Among those who contributed to this mass of African knowledge were Governors, scientists, and technicians from Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal. Conspicuous were the names of Marshal Balbo, Governor of Italian Libya ; Sir John Maffey, recently Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office in London ; M. Henri Labouret, Director of the Institute of African Languages and Civilizations in Paris ; Freiherr von Lindequist, ex-Director of the Colonial Department in Berlin ; M. Pierre Ryckmans, Governor-General of the Belgian Congo ; and Senhor A. Ferreira, former Minister for the Colonies in Lisbon.

The publication of the proceedings of this international conference in Rome, together with the production of Lord Hailey's Survey, forms a substantial beginning of co-operative African research and distribution of information. But these two efforts in themselves are not enough, and should only be regarded as a starting-point for further efforts. While most African questions should come

within the sphere of research, with information distributed through an African Bureau, this seems to be no reason why local organizations should not be set up in different regions of Africa to deal with the questions of special local urgency. The various governments interested in the development of North-East Africa would greatly benefit from an organization of this kind ; and, judging from the general feeling at the Rome Conference, a move in this direction would be welcomed. Periodical meetings of a body for the collection of expert information could be held in different centres, thereby encouraging officials and experts of the different territories to gain some first-hand knowledge of each other's country and methods of working.

Although there are many British officials and others possessing an intimate knowledge of certain parts of North-East Africa, there are few who have anything approaching a general knowledge of this whole region. The reason for this is obvious. It is impossible for any one individual to acquire anything more than a superficial acquaintance with so vast an area, containing such a multitude of complicated questions of the utmost variety. The subject can only be dealt with adequately by a collection of experts on the various technical questions concerned. As it is in British interests to make a careful and detailed study of this vast African region served by the Nile and the Red Sea, it is suggested that there should be some common forum providing those interested with the opportunity of hearing what experts on these different questions have to say, and of discussing among themselves their relationship to one another. Although some people in England seem to prefer to wait and see what is going to happen before taking any action, we should keep pace with the times by acquiring knowledge in anticipation of events. Now is the time to learn everything we can about the different questions likely to arise in the near future. Unless we take some action in this direction, we shall find ourselves at a serious disadvantage when the opportune moment arrives for taking our share in some progressive movement.

The war in Europe may hold up some of the major projects ; but a great deal can be done, with which the war can interfere little if at all.

In some British quarters, including those chiefly concerned with colonial questions, there is apt to be a disinclination to part company with the time-expired notions of the nineteenth century, impregnated as they are with a superior and self-satisfied conception of ' ourselves and the world.' There is, therefore, an inclination, especially among the older colonial authorities in England, to favour a policy of inaction where there is a question of progress under conditions with which they are not yet familiar. Fortunately, the attitude of the younger officials actually serving in Africa is much less conservative ; for these men realize the magnitude of the change which is taking place before their eyes as a result of Italy's twentieth-century methods of colonization and the revolution in methods of transport. In this country we do not realize the effect of this age of invention on more or less primitive countries situated in an area of great distances. Italy has introduced young and vigorous blood into North-East Africa, and this is already beginning to have important results. About this there is an urgent and pressing need for information ; for the British people know little of the questions which will very shortly be of the utmost importance to British interests in this part of Africa. This ignorance is not confined to the general public. These times through which we are now passing are a turning-point in the destinies of nations. If Great Britain is going to seize the new and far-reaching opportunities presented by the many-sided transformation of the age in which we live, she must at least think and act abreast of changing conditions and the progress of events. c

In North-East Africa, we have vital interests to safeguard. We cannot do this by lagging behind while another great Power pushes ahead. The two great Powers chiefly interested in this region must go forward together at an even pace, so that the interests of the one become the

interests of the other. With a policy of strength, co-operation and progress in deeds as well as in words, the future of North-East Africa and the preservation of British interests will be assured. There are no more appropriate words with which to conclude this narrative than those used by Louis Napoleon nearly a hundred years ago :

“Marchez à la tête des idées de votre siècle, ces idées vous suivent et vous soutiennent. Marchez à leur suite, elles vous entraînent. Marchez contre elles, elles vous renversent.”

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INDEX

A

Aba, 136
 Abbai River, the Little, 94, 95
 Abdin Palace, the, 45
 Abdin Square (Cairo), 44
 Abdullah Hassan, Mohammed bin, 204
 Abdullah, Khalifa, 120
 Abu Hamed, 89, 97, 134, 135
 Abu Zeid ford, the, 93, 135
 Addis Abeba, 5, 25, 64, 105, 137, 155, 159, 165, 169, 170, 172, 176, 178, 179, 180, 188, 198, 200, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 224, 226, 235, 237, 244, 246, 261, 267
 Aden, Gulf of, 6, 18, 20, 67, 196, 197, 202, 209, 221
 Adly Pasha, 32, 33
 Adua, 177
 Africa, Central, 89
 Africa, East, 19, 24
 Africa, North-East, 5 *et seq.*
 Africa, South, 19, 21, 24, 25, 66
 Africa, West, 24, 138
 African Conference (Rome), the, 270, 271
 Aga Khan, H.H., 26
 Agordat, 198
 Aida, 72
 L'Aigle, 70, 71
 Ala Littoria Air Line, the, 25, 6, 199
 Albert, Lake, 90, 91, 92, 104, 249, 265
 Alexander the Great, 16
 Alexandria, 19, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 44, 50, 51, 52, 59, 61, 70, 84, 155, 240
 Alexandria Navigation Company, the, 50
 Algeria, 63
 Almaza Aerodrome, the, 51
 American Mission, the, 117
 Amhara, 165, 167, 170, 172, 180, 189
 Amharas, the, 161, 175, 183
 An African Survey, 269

Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the. *See under Sudan*
 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance, the, 27, 37
 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, the, 6, 14, 26, 41, 43, 52, 57, 59, 63, 85, 130, 131, 157
 Anglo-French Declaration of 1904, the, 259
 Anglo-Italian Agreement of 1938, the, 6, 14, 27, 28, 48, 85, 130, 134, 137, 151, 181, 206, 208, 222, 229, 230, 231, 236, 243, 250, 256, 258
 Ansaldo Works, the, 258
 Anuak tribe, the, 235
 Aosta, H.R.H. the Duke of, 168, 169
 Arabian Desert, the, 15
 Asmara, 25, 64, 138, 170, 177, 189, 199, 249, 252, 267
 Assab, 18, 170, 189, 196, 197, 214, 243
 Assiut, 51, 97, 99, 103, 105
 Asuan, 15, 23, 51, 59, 60, 91, 97, 98
 Assuan Dam, the, 47, 57, 60, 63, 97, 99, 103, 104, 105, 107, 150
 d'Astorg, Rue, 79
 Atbai, 141
 Atbara, 102, 109, 114, 134
 Atbara River, the, 88, 89, 94, 96, 97, 100, 101, 102, 109, 114, 128
 Augustus, 16
 Aujila Oasis, the, 251
 Australia, 24
 Australian War Memorial, the, 78
 Austria, Emperor of, 71
 Austrian Roman Catholic Mission, 117
 Awash River, the, 105, 152, 188, 194
 Azaracho, King, 94

B

Bab-el-Mandeb, Straits of, 18, 66, 204, 212, 225, 227, 228, 262

- Badoglio, Marshal, 21
 Bagara Rapid, the, 97
 Baghdad, 19, 51, 52
 Bahrdar Giorgis, 95, 184
 Bahr-el-Abiad, the (White Nile), 93
 Bahr-el-Asfar, the (Sobat River), 93
 Bahr-el-Azrak (the Blue Nile), 94
 Bahr-el-Ghazal, the, 88, 89, 92,
 93, 99, 115, 134, 135, 140, 152
 Bahr-el-Jebel, the, 92, 93
 Bahr-el-Zeraf, the, 92
 Balbo, Marshal, 252, 270
 Banco di Roma, the, 193, 236
 Bank Misr, the, 53, 54
 Baraka River, 105, 143, 144
 Barakat, 147
Barenfels, 76
 Baro River, the, 93, 99, 236, 244,
 246
 Basra, 21
 Baun-el-Haggar (Belly of the Rocks),
 98
 Bayuda desert, the, 140
 Bedden Rapids, the, 152
 Belgian Congo, the, 135, 136, 154,
 245
 Belgium, 270
 Benghasi, 29, 61, 62, 64, 251
 Beni Shangul, 235, 246
 Berber, 97, 98, 113, 153
 Berbera, 197, 202, 203, 205, 209,
 212, 232, 243
 Berbera-Hargeisa-Jijiga road, the,
 232
 Bir-Bir River, the, 189
 Bir-en-Natrum, 251
 Birmingham, 30
 Biscia, 198, 249
 Bishoftu, 178
 Bitter Lakes, the, 71, 78, 80
 Boma Plateau, the, 235
 Bon Voisinage Agreement, 222, 229
 Brava, 197
 British Somaliland, 5, 6, 13, 18,
 190, 202-221, 222, 229, 231,
 232, 243, 244, 267
 Broken Hill, 23
 Bulawayo, 23
 Bulhar, 203, 205
 Burao, 203, 205, 208, 211
- C
- Cæsar, Julius, 88
 Cairo, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 33,
 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45,
 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60,
 64, 72, 73, 75, 80, 89, 97, 98,
 100, 103, 121, 135, 250, 260
 Cairo Opera House, the, 72
 Cairo, University of, 58
 Calcutta, 22
 Capetown, 22, 23, 223
 Castellani, Sir Aldo, 176
Ceres (flying-boat), 22
 Cerulli, Signor Enrico, 169
 Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 32, 33
 Charing Cross Road, the, 46
*Chemin de fer Franco-Ethiopien de
 Jibuti à Addis-Abeba*, 217
 Cher-Cher, 178
 China, 221
 Church Missionary Society, the, 117
 Cobham, Sir Alan, 21
 Cobham-Blackburn Air Lines, 21
*Compagnie Impériale des Chemins de
 fer Ethiopiens*, 215
*Compagnie Universelle du Canal Mari-
 time de Suez*, the, 68
 Condominium of 1899, the, 35, 40,
 237
 Constantinople, 75
 Constantinople Convention of 1888,
 the, 85
 Continental Hotel, Cairo, the, 47
 Convention of Montreux, the, 39
 Coptic Church, the, 240
Côte Française des Somalis (native
 race), 212
 Cromer, Lord, 17, 20, 48, 75
 Curzon, Lord, 32, 33
 Cyprus, 39
 Cyrene, 63
- D
- Dadessa Valley, the Upper, 237
 Daga Valley, the, 235
 Dahlak Archipelago, the, 190
 Damascus, 52, 102
 Damietta, 89, 97, 98
 Danakil Desert, 105, 160, 170, 189,
 190, 194, 220
 Darfur, 114, 140, 153
 Debusi River, the, 95
 Delta, the, 103, 105
 Densa, 94
 Derby, Lord, 73, 74
Derflinger, 76
 Dessié, 170, 177, 179, 188, 198,
 220
 Dinder River, the, 96, 235
 Dinkas tribes, the, 140
 Direedawa, 170, 211, 215, 217
 Disraeli, 73, 74

Dodoma, 23
 Dongola, 99, 143, 251
 Dongola reach, the, 135
 Donyiro, 234
 Dumeira, 18, 225
 Dura River, the, 95
 Durban, 22, 23

E

East African Mining Company, the, 189
École Centrale, 80
École Polytechnique, 80
 Ed Ducim, 94
 Egypt, mentioned, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 68, 69, 70, 72, 77, 85, 87, 97, 100, 101, 102, 104, 107, 110, 133, 137, 140, 149, 150, 154, 157, 184, 192, 193, 194, 198, 199, 201, 216, 222, 231, 237, 239, 241, 243, 250, 252, 256, 260, 262, 264, 266, 269
 new policy of, 31-49
 progress in, 50-65
 Egyptian Irrigation Department, the, 93, 145, 245
 Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, the, 150, 151
 Egyptian State Railways, the, 50, 59, 135, 250
 El Abadia, 98
 El Gahak, 247, 250
 El Obeid, 134, 249
Engineer, The, 108
 England, 21, 22, 25, 30, 34, 46, 51, 164, 271
 Equator, the, 90
 Equatorial Basin, the (Nile), 88
 Erigavo, 203, 208
 Eritrea, 5, 13, 16, 18, 21, 159, 161, 162, 165, 177, 183, 184, 186, 189, 216, 243, 249
 Er Renk, 94, 170, 247, 250
 Esna, 97, 99, 103
 Ethiopia, 5, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 25, 36, 43, 60, 62, 88, 93, 101, 106, 133, 149, 151, 154, 156, 159-181, 182-201, 205, 215, 216, 217, 223, 224, 227, 233, 234, 235, 236, 239, 243, 248, 254, 257
 Ethiopian Basin, the (Nile), 88
 Ethiopian Church, the, 231, 240, 241
Ethiopian Realities, 5

Etoile, bay of, 212
 Eugénie, Empress, 70, 71
 Euphrates, the, 26

F

Falasha tribe, the, 161
 Famaka, 95
 Farouk, King, 41, 44-47, 57, 264
 Fashoda, 94
 Fayoum, 57, 103
 Ferreira, Senhor A., 270
 Fiat Works, the, 258
 Florence, 258
 Fola Rapids, the, 91, 152
 France, 19, 20, 28, 47, 68, 94, 159, 222, 254, 256, 269, 270
 Franco-Italian Agreement of 1935, the, 18, 222, 224
 Fremantle, 84
 French Equatorial Africa, 25, 260
 French Somaliland, 5, 6, 13, 17, 18, 202-221, 222, 227, 231, 243
 Fresh-Water Canal, the, 75
 Fuad, King, 41, 45, 58, 59

G

Gabait, 153
 Galhak, 94
 Galla Sidama, 165, 172
 Gallabat, 136, 154, 198, 248, 250
 Gallas tribe, the, 161, 183, 186
 Gambela, 93, 99, 130, 136, 151, 155, 170, 193, 198, 236, 239, 244, 245, 246, 250
 Gardulla, 234
 Garstin, Sir William, 99, 145
 Gash River, the, 105, 143, 144
 Gedaref, 60, 134, 248, 250
 Gellatly, Hankey & Company, 244
 Genale, 183
 Geneina, 138
 Geneva, 40
 Geographical Society, the, 58
 Germany, 38, 66, 79, 159, 263, 270
 Germiston, 23
 Gezireh, the, 15, 112, 114
 Ghadames, 62
 Chibit River, the, 189
 Ghimbi, 137
 Gibraltar, 67
 Gibraltar, Straits of, 66, 228

Gimma, 170, 177, 178, 183, 184,
187, 193, 244
Gladstone, 73
Gobad, 213
Gobad, Sultan of, 214
Gojjam, 95, 160, 184, 186
Gold Coast, the, 25
Gondar, 170, 177, 179
Gordon College, the, 117, 119, 124,
127, 207
Gore, 246
Grabham and Black, Mission to
Lake Tana. *See* footnote pp.
100, 150
Grand Hotel, the, 119
Graziani, Marshal, 21, 168, 169,
240
Great Britain, 5, 6, 19, 20, 25, 27,
31, 35, 37, 38, 42, 43, 47, 68,
72, 74, 76, 94, 154, 181, 192,
198, 215, 222, 231, 237, 251,
254, 259, 262, 264, 266, 269,
270, 272
Great War, the, 53, 76, 77, 225,
263
Greenwood, Frederick, 73
Guardafui, Cape, 18
Gulu, 247
Gutenfels, 76

H

Hafez Afifi Pasha, Dr., 36, 37
Haile Selassie, Emperor, 161, 173,
261
Hailey, Lord, 269, 270
Haiya Junction, 134
Harar, 105, 160, 165, 179, 188, 189,
197, 208, 232, 252
Hararis, the, 161
Hargeisa, 203, 206, 208, 211, 232
Hassanein, Sir Ahmed. (*See also*
under Hassanein Pasha), 46
Hassanein Pasha. (*See also* under
Sir Ahmed Hassanein), 46
Heliopolis, 51
Henderson, Mr., 32, 33
Homs, 62
Holland, 66, 79
Hong Kong, 24, 84
Hydrobiology, Institute of, 58

I

Ibrahimieh Canal, the, 103
Imperial Airways, 21, 22, 23, 24,
60, 91, 93, 245
India, 14, 19, 21, 24, 37, 66, 68, 221

Indian Ocean, the, 6, 196, 254
Indo-China, 199, 221
Indus, the, 26
Ismail Pasha, H.H. the Khedive of
Egypt, 70, 71, 72, 73
Ismailia, 71, 78, 80, 81, 85
Italian Air Force, the, 168
Italian Colonial Service, the, 165
Italian East Africa, 5, 6, 13, 17, 18,
19, 20, 25, 27, 48, 61, 63, 105,
110, 129, 137, 154-158, 160,
163, 164, 166, 167, 177, 180,
185, 188, 190, 191, 193, 196,
199, 201, 222, 223, 229, 230,
231, 233, 234, 237, 240, 243,
250, 255, 259, 265
Italian East African Transport
Company, the, 198
Italian Navy, the, 258
Italian Somaliland, 5, 13, 16, 18,
21, 159, 161, 162, 165, 177,
183, 184, 185, 202, 205, 216,
232, 233, 243
Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-1936,
the, 5, 18, 20, 21, 27, 28, 35,
77, 105, 129, 154, 159, 201,
205, 217, 219, 220, 224, 226,
228, 230, 258, 261
Italy, 5, 6, 19, 20, 25, 28, 43, 44,
47, 50, 63, 66, 67, 68, 79, 84,
86, 155, 162, 163, 178, 181, 190,
191, 192, 195, 198, 222-242,
254, 257, 259, 263, 266, 268,
269, 270, 272
African wealth of, 182-201
Italy's Conquest of Abyssinia, 5
Iubdo, 189

J

Jebel Aulia, 94
Jebel Aulia Dam, the, 99, 100, 104,
250
Jebel-el-Wenat, 251
Jebelain, 93, 135
Jerusalem, 240
Jibuti, 18, 20, 170, 197, 198, 199,
202, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216,
219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225,
226, 227, 243, 254, 260
Jibuti-Addis Abeba railway, 25,
199, 212, 223, 227, 259
Jiddalleh, 204
Jijiga, 206, 208, 211, 232
Johannesburg, 23, 119, 223
Juba, 98, 105, 134, 135, 136, 233
245
Juba River, the, 16, 91, 161, 183,
184, 197

K

- Kaffa, 172, 184, 187, 189
 Kagira, River, 90
 Kaka, 115
 Kampala, 23
 Kassala, 60, 105, 114, 134, 138,
 141, 142, 143, 144, 153, 154,
 198, 248, 250
 Kenya, 21, 23, 25, 130, 160, 186,
 197, 222, 229, 230, 233, 234,
 235, 267
 Keren, 198, 249
 Kerima, 99, 134, 135
 Kerma, 98, 99, 134, 135
 Kerreri Hills, the, 121
 Khartoum, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 51,
 59, 60, 63, 64, 89, 91, 94, 95,
 96, 97, 98, 100, 104, 111, 112,
 113, 114, 118, 119, 127, 134,
 136, 137, 138, 142, 152, 153,
 155, 235, 239, 245, 250, 267,
 269
 population of, 119
 Khartoum-Sennar-El-Obeid rail-
 way, the, 94
 Khartoum-Wadi Halfa reach, the,
 98
 Kioga, Lake, 90
 Kisimayo, 197
 Kisumu, 19, 21, 23
 Kitchener, Lord, 119, 120
 Kodok, 94
 Kordofan, 93, 94, 114, 115, 134,
 140, 153
 Kosti, 59, 94, 134, 245, 247, 249
 Kufra Oasis, the, 15, 251, 252
 Kurmuk, 94, 136, 137, 154, 170,
 198, 246, 250

L

- Labouret, M. Henri, 270
 Lado, 91
 Lampson, Sir Miles, 36
 League of Nations, the, 40
 Lekemti, 137, 170, 184, 193, 244,
 246
 Leptis Magna, 63
 de Lesseps, Ferdinand, 17, 20, 68,
 70, 72
 Libya, 15, 19, 27, 29, 43, 62, 63,
 165, 175, 179, 180, 200, 242,
 250, 251, 270
 Libyan Desert, the, 15
 von Lindequist, Freiherr, 270
 Lisbon, 270

- Locarno Room (Foreign Office),
 the, 37
 London, 23, 36, 73, 84, 149
 London, Treaty of (1915), 225
 Luxor, 20, 51, 97

M

- MacDonald, Ramsay, 32
 MacMichael, Sir Harold, 113, 122,
 126
 Madagascar, 19, 199, 221, 223
 Maffey, Sir John, 270
 Magdala, 21
 Magi, 234, 235
 Mahmoud Pasha, 32, 33
 Mahroussa, 71
 Makale, 177
 Makwar Dam, the, 96, 104, 114,
 134, 148, 149, 248, 249
 Malakal, 60, 93, 94, 100, 138, 245,
 250
 Malaya, 24
 Malcolm, Sir Ian, 70, 73
 Manila, 84
 Maraghi, Sheikh, Rector of Al
 Azhar University, Cairo, 46
 Marchand, Colonel, 94
 Marconi Wireless and Telegraph
 Company, the, 23
 Mareb River, the, 144
 Margherita, Lake, 183
 Massawa, 17, 18, 21, 25, 77, 130,
 155, 170, 188, 189, 190, 196,
 198, 199, 218, 220, 225, 226,
 243, 249, 252
 Massawa-Asmara Railway, the, 198
 Maxwell, Sir John, 77
 Mbeya, 23
 Mecca, 241
 Mediterranean Sea, the, 18, 20,
 27, 31, 62, 66, 68, 71, 78, 88,
 200, 250, 255, 257
 Memphis, 20
 Menelik, Emperor, 149, 187, 214,
 215, 233, 236
 Merca, 197
 Mersa Matruh, 61
 Meshra-el-Rek, 134, 135
 Messageries Maritimes, the, 199
 SS. Michael and Zarabruk, Church
 of, 95
 Milner, Lord, 32, 33
 Misr Airwork Company, the, 51
 Misr Sea Navigation Company, the,
 50
 Misurata, 62, 179

Modern Egypt (Cromer), 75
 Mogadishu, 77, 170, 188, 197, 198, 199
 Mohammed Ali, 17, 70, 102
 Mombasa, 233
 Mongalla, 234
 Morocco, 260
 Moshi, 23
 Moyale, 197, 233
 Mpika, 23
 Murille, 234
 Mussolini, Benito, 118, 258
 Mwanza, 23, 24

N

Nag Hamadi, 97, 99
 Nag Hamadi Barrage, the, 57, 103
 Nahas Pasha, 32, 33, 36, 37
 Nairobi, 23
 Napier, Lord, 21
 Naples, Bay of, 258
 Napoleon Bonaparte, 13, 17, 20, 70, 273
 Nasir, 245, 250
 National Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, the, 47
National Review, the, 73
 Negelli, 184, 197
 Neggio, 137
New Abyssinia, The, 5, 170
 Newhouse, Major F., 7
 Newhouse, Major F. (late Inspector-General of Egyptian Irrigation in the Sudan), 7, 108
 New York, 84
 New Zealand, 84
 Nigeria, 25
 Nile, the, 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, 31, 48, 51, 60, 63, 75, 87-109, 135, 150, 194, 201, 243, 271
 Nile, the Albert, 88, 92, 104
 Nile Basin, the, 89, 90
 Nile, the Blue, 15, 27, 48, 39, 60, 88, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 107, 109, 111, 114, 134, 143, 148, 153, 170, 188, 238, 246, 261, 266
 Nile, the White, 15, 59, 60, 89, 90, 93, 94, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 114, 134, 143, 148, 153, 170, 215, 245, 246, 249, 250
 Nile Valley, the, 43, 64, 84, 88, 89, 90, 153, 235, 246, 252, 257, 267
 Nile, the Victoria, 90, 92
 Nimule, 91, 92, 136, 138, 152

No, Lake, 89, 92, 93, 99, 115
 Nuba Mountains, 114
 Nubia, 240
 Nubian Desert, the, 89, 251
 Nuci tribe, the, 140, 235

O

Obok, 212, 213, 214, 215, 227
 Ogaden, 232
 Ogaden Desert, the, 160, 197, 211
 Oletta, 178
 Omdurman, 93, 94, 118, 120, 128, 141, 155, 244, 249
 Omdurman Bridge, 94, 96, 104
 Omo River, the, 152, 188, 189, 194
 Oppenheim, Henry, 73

P

Paez, Pedro, 94
 Palestine, 51, 53, 167
Pall Mall Gazette, the, 73
 Palmerston, Lord, 68, 73
 Panama, 84
 Panama Canal, the, 84
 Paris, 69, 79
 Pentapolis, 240
 Perim, 18, 212
 Persian Gulf, the, 19
 Philæ, the Temple of, 97
 Pibor River, the, 93
 Plateau, Lake, 89
 Pontine Marshes, the, 178, 258
 Port Fuad, 81
 Port Said, 51, 69, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81
 Port Sudan, 17, 60, 95, 134, 154, 155, 156, 157, 198, 238, 240, 245, 246, 249, 252
 Port Tewfik, 69, 78, 80, 81
 Portugal, 270
 Portuguese East Africa, 25
 Prussia, Crown Prince of, 71
 Pyramids, the, 72

R

Rahad River, the, 96
 Ras Hafun, 204
 Ras Imru, 168, 169
 Ras Kasar, 130
 Red Sea, the, 6, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 27, 28, 31, 36, 66, 78,

- 84, 140, 142, 143, 153, 160, 190, 196, 198, 199, 211, 212, 227, 228, 248, 251, 254, 255, 260, 262, 265, 271
- Rejaf, 152
- Report of the Mission to Lake Tana by Grabham and Black—see footnote, pp. 100, 150
- Rhodesia, 23
- Rhodesia, Northern, 23
- Rhodesia, Southern, 23
- Ripon Falls, the, 90
- Rojdestvsky, Admiral, 76
- Rome, 21, 64, 165, 166
- Roseires, 95, 99, 100, 150, 170, 238, 247, 250, 265
- Rosetta, 89, 97
- Rothschild, Messrs., 73
- Royal Academy of Italy, the, 269
- Rudolph, Lake, 130, 194
- Ryckmans, M. Pierre, 270
- S
- Sabderat, 136
- Sabratha, 63
- Said Pasha, 68, 70
- Saio, 184, 187, 193, 246
- Saladin, 16
- Salisbury, 23
- Salonika, 53
- Sarwat Pasha, 32, 33
- Semien Mountains, the, 170
- Sennar, 59, 60, 96, 107, 145, 146, 155, 249, 250
- Setit River, the, 235
- Shabluka Cataract, the, 98
- Sheikh, 207
- Shellal, 60, 61, 98, 135
- Shilluk tribe, the, 140
- Shire, 183
- Shoa, 160, 189
- Sidamo, 172, 184
- Sidney, 84
- Singa, 96
- Sirius, 87, 88
- Sobat River, the, 88, 89, 93, 99, 100, 101, 109
- Society of Political Economy, Statistics and Legislation, the, 58
- Sollum, 61
- Somali tribes, the, 202, 203, 204, 212
- Somalia, 165
- Sorrento, 258
- Southampton, 245
- Southampton Water, 22
- Spain, 68
- Suakin, 134
- Such River, the, 152
- Suez, 77, 81, 84, 212
- Suez Canal, the, 7, 17, 18, 19, 28, 31, 33, 38, 43, 47, 52, 63, 66—86, 240, 254, 257, 260, 262, 265
- Suez Canal Company, the, 20, 69, 70, 73, 76, 77, 78, 81, 83, 223
- Suez Canal Concession, 19, 20, 69
- Sudan (Anglo-Egyptian), the, 5, 6, 13, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27, 34, 35, 40, 43, 48, 60, 63, 89, 91, 95, 96, 105, 110—158, 160, 191, 192, 193, 194, 198, 199, 201, 215, 222, 229, 231, 234, 235, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 250, 256, 264, 266
- Native tribes of, 113—116
- Sudan Permanent Committee of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the, 59
- Sudan Plantation Syndicate, the, 145, 146, 147, 148
- Sudan Railways, the, 59, 60, 121, 250
- Sudan United Mission, the, 117
- Suki, 95, 96, 99, 247, 248, 250
- Syria, 51
- T
- Tajura, 212
- Tajura, Gulf of, 212
- Tajura, Sultan of, 214
- Tana, Lake, 48, 95, 96, 100, 104, 105, 106, 149, 150, 151, 160, 184, 186, 229, 231, 248, 261, 265
- Tanganyika, 22, 23, 25
- Tanganyika, Lake, 88, 90
- Tayiba, 145, 147
- Termaber Pass, the, 170
- Tessenel, 183, 249
- Theodore of Ethiopia, 5
- Tigré, 189
- Timsah, Lake, 78, 80
- Tokar, 105
- Tower of London, the, 34
- Tripoli, 29, 62, 63, 252
- Tunis, 29, 61, 62, 63, 225, 252, 256
- Turkana tribe, the, 235
- Turkey, 37
- Tutankhamen treasures, the, 47
- U
- Uganda, 23, 25, 89, 135, 215, 245
- Ulu, 247
- United States of America, the, 184

V

Venice, 258
 Verdi, 72
 Victoria, Lake, 90
 Victoria, H.M. Queen, 72
 Victoria, West, 23
 Villaggio Duca Abruzzi, 183, 184,
 199
 Volta Conference, the, 269

W

Wadi Halfa, 23, 44, 59, 60, 61, 64,
 89, 97, 98, 112, 113, 134, 135,
 136, 152, 154, 245, 250
 Wad Medani, 96, 121, 249
 Wau River, the, 152
 Webi Shebeli River, the, 16, 105,
 161, 184
 Wellington, N.Z., 84
 Western Desert, the (Egypt), 61
 White Engineering Company, the,
 151
 Wilson, Sir Arnold, 7, 84

Wilson Airways, 21
 Wisko, 247, 250
 Woghera, 178
 Wollo Galla, 186
 World Economic Conference
 (London, 1933), 26

Y

Yemen, 260
 Yokohama, 84

Z

Zaghawa tribe, the, 140
 Zaghlul Pasha, 31, 32, 33
 Zarabruk, 94
 Zeidab, 145
 Zeila, 197, 203, 205, 206, 208, 212,
 232, 243
 Zeila-Aisha road, the, 232
 Zeila-Jijiga-Borao road, the, 232
 Zifta, 97, 105
 Zliten, 62

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Page Twenty-Two

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Page Twenty-Four

